Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

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Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-95-037 *24 February 1995*

CONTENTS

NOTICE TO READERS: An * indicates material not disseminated in electronic form.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Arab-Israeli Talks

Four-Way Ministerial Meeting on Refugees Postponed *[Amman Radio]* 1
Secret Israeli-Palestinian Meeting Near Stockholm Reported
[Stockholm SVENSKA DAGBLADET 21 Feb] 1

Inter-Arab Affairs

UNSC Meeting Requested To Discuss Israeli Settlements *[Jericho VOP]* 1

Palestinian Affairs

Al-Tibi Says Time for 'Secret Talks' Agreement *[Jerusalem Radio]* 1
PA Secretary General on Peace Process, Opposition *[AL-HAYAH AL-JADIDAH 20 Feb]* 2
Qaddumi Leaves Tunis for Baghdad To Meet Saddam *[Jericho VOP]* 4
DFLP Criticizes PLO Executive Committee Meeting *[AL-NAHAR 23 Feb]* 4
DFLP's Hawatimah Proposes Alternative to Oslo Agreement *[HA'ARETZ 24 Feb]* 4
Hamas Spokesman Ghawshah Demands 'Arafat Dismissal *[Damascus Radio]* 5
Minister Says Hamas Election Ban 'Unacceptable' *[Vienna KURIER 24 Feb]* 5
Authority Begins Use of Palestinian Postage Stamps *[Jericho VOP]* 5
Report Says Israel Funding Immigration of Chechen Jews *[Jericho VOP]* 5

ARAB AFRICA

Algeria

Serkadji Prison Riot Death Tolls, Reaction Reported 7
Boumaarafi Said Among Instigators *[MAP]* 7
FIS Denounces 'Massacre' of Prisoners *[IRNA]* 7
Authorities Say 96 Inmates Killed *[Algiers TV]* 7
Human Rights Body Urges Inquiry *[Paris International]* 7
Zeroual Addresses Workers Union Rally *[Algiers TV]* 8
Trial of Suspected Boudiaf Killer To Begin Soon *[Algiers Radio]* 10

Egypt

Israel's Peres, Mubarak Discuss Peace Process *[MENA]* 10
Musa, Peres Hold News Conference *[MENA]* 10
Peres Leaves Cairo *[MENA]* 11
Al-Baz Rejects 'Indefinite' Extension of NPT *[MENA]* 11
'Arafat Arrives From Saudi Arabia on Short Visit *[Cairo Radio]* 12
'Arafat Leaves for Gaza *[MENA]* 12
U.S. Stance on 'Terror,' Nuclear Treaty Viewed *[AKHBAR AL-YAWM 18 Feb]* 12
Clinton Said Using Mideast for Second-Term Bid *[AL-JUMHURIYAH 16 Feb]* 13
Papers Discuss NPT, Israeli Anti-Egypt 'Campaign' *[MENA]* 16
MB Spokesman Denies Links to 'Terrorism' *[AL-WAFD 15 Feb]* 17
MB's Mashhur Denies Accord With Extremist Groups *[AL-AHALI 15 Feb]* 17
Prime Minister on Allowances, Investment, 'Terrorism' *[Cairo Radio]* 17
Official on Antiterrorism Measures, Nile Cruises *[MENA]* 18
Comprehensive Strategy Against 'Terrorism' Advocated *[AL-AHRAM AL-DUWALI 20 Jan]* 19

Article Explores 'Living With' Limited 'Terrorism' *[AL-AHRAM AL-DUWALI 20 Jan]* 20
Article Views Egyptian Influence in Asia *[AL-AHRAM AL-DUWALI 19 Jan]* 22
Article Examines Reports on Economy *[AL-MUSAWWAR 6 Jan]* 24

Libya

Tripoli Signs Accord With Malta on Joint Trade Council *[Tripoli Radio]* 25

Sudan

London Paper Interviews Ummah Party Leader *[London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 19 Feb]* 26
Opposition Groups Reach 'Common Understanding' *[London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 20 Feb]* .. 28

Tunisia

President Holds Talks With Algeria's Dembri *[Tunis Radio]* 28
Nigerian Minister Visits, Discusses Opening Embassy *[Tunis Radio]* 29

ARABIAN PENINSULA

Kuwait

Foreign Minister on European Tour, Iraq *[Paris Radio Monte Carlo]* 30

Saudi Arabia

King Fahd Receives Syrian Foreign Minister al-Shar' *[Damascus Radio]* 31
King Fahd Meets With PLO's 'Arafat in Mecca *[Jericho VOP]* 31
Prince Sultan Meets 'Arafat *[Riyadh Radio]* 31
Defense Minister Meets 'Arafat *[SPA]* 31
'Arafat Departs After Pilgramage *[Riyadh Radio]* 31
Paper Says U.S. 'Sides With Israel' Against Arabs *[London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 21 Feb]* 31

Yemen

Prime Minister on Saudi Negotiations, U.S. Role *[AL-RA'Y 23 Feb]* 32
Official Denies Iranian Troops in Yemen Before, After War *[IRNA]* 33

IRAQ

Ramadan Meets Bulgarian Team; Message for Saddam *[INA]* 34
Minister Seeks Enhanced Ties *[INA]* 34
Transport Minister Meets With Spanish Businessmen *[INA]* 34
Energy, Telecom Accords Signed *[INA]* 34
Transport Minister Meets With Brazilian Team *[INA]* 34
Health Minister Meets Jordanian Businessmen *[INA]* 34
Talabani Reiterates PUK 'Peace Endeavors' *[Voice of the People of Kurdistan]* 34
PUK Statement on Fighting in Irbil, Other Areas *[Voice of the People of Kurdistan]* 35
'Corrupt' Rulers Criticized; Joint Arab Action Urged *[BABIL 11 Feb]* 35
Arab League Notified of More Allied Overflights *[INA]* 36
*Alexandria Summit Condemned, Secret Deals Alleged *[AL-JUMHURIYAH 3 Jan 95]* 36
Agricultural Companies, Secrets Under Scrutiny *[AL-JUMHURIYAH 4 Jan]* 38

ISRAEL

Rabin Denies Knowledge of Washington Summit in Apr *[Jerusalem Radio]* 42
Rabin Tells SLA 'Blood Alliance' Will Continue *[Tel Aviv Radio]* 42
Peres on Mubarak Meeting, Christopher Visit *[Jerusalem Radio]* 42
Peres: No Changes on NPT Stance Until Threats Eliminated *[Jerusalem TV]* 43
'Source': No Reason for Concessions to Egypt on NPT *[Jerusalem Radio]* 44
Egypt Seen Serving as U.S. 'Proxy' on NPT *[THE JERUSALEM POST 24 Feb]* 44
Poll Shows 71% Opposed to NPT's Signing *[YEDI'OT AHARONOT 24 Feb]* 45
Peres on 'Janin First,' Syria, Netzarim Evacuation *[DAVAR 24 Feb]* 45
'Senior' Source on 'Terrorism,' CIS Espionage *[Jerusalem Radio]* 46
Police Plan To Defend Population Against 'Terrorism' *[YEDI'OT AHARONOT 23 Feb]* 47
Defense Ministry Director General Interviewed *[DAVAR 17 Feb]* 47
Gen. Yifrah Named Chief of Military Intelligence *[Jerusalem Radio]* 49

JORDAN

'Source': U.S. Aid Continues Despite 'Republican Era' *[AKHBAR AL-USBU' 23 Feb]* 50
PA Representative: Jerusalem Dispute Settled *[Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI 17 Feb]* 50
Statement Welcomes Mediation Between Qatar, Bahrain *[Amman TV]* 50

LEBANON

Rabin Visits Border Areas in South, Comments *[Voice of the South]* 52
Al-Hariri: Israeli Moves 'Way of Avoiding' Peace Demands *[Beirut Radio]* 52
Labor Minister Threatens Attacks on Israeli Cities *[VOL]* 52
Hizballah Chief Threatens To Attack Israeli Settlements *[RFL]* 53
Official Meets U.S., Russian Envoys on South Situation *[Beirut Radio]* 53
Iranian Official Denies Visit Linked to Israeli Prisoner *[Beirut Radio]* 53

SYRIA

Al-Ahmar Demands 'Complete' Israeli Withdrawal *[SANA]* 54
Israeli 'Aggressions' Viewed; U.S. 'Pressure' Urged *[Damascus Radio]* 54
U.S., Russian Action Urged To Save Peace Process *[Damascus Radio]* 55
Al-Ahmar Meets Moroccan Official, Stresses Peace *[Damascus Radio]* 55
Columnist Defends Right To Attend Conference *[TISHRIN 31 Jan]* 56
Paper Advocates Reform in Banking System *[TISHRIN 4 Feb]* 56
New Price Increase Questioned *[AL-BA'TH 7 Feb]* 57
Daily Applauds Food Industry Improvements *[TISHRIN 1 Feb]* 57
Hamah-Based Company To Build New Cement Factory *[AL-BA'TH 5 Feb]* 58
Official Discusses Glass 'Crisis,' Proposals *[TISHRIN 7 Feb]* 59
Minister Inspects Projects in Idlib, Hamah *[AL-BA'TH 7 Feb]* 60
Column Analyzes 1994 Population Census *[AL-BA'TH 6 Feb]* 60

SOUTH ASIA

India

Congress-I Stakes Claim to Manipur Government *[Delhi Radio]* 62
Editorial Discusses Postponement of SAARC Summit *[JANSATTA 21 Feb]* 62

Iran

U.S. Motives in Persian Gulf Examined *[KEYHAN-E HAVA'I 7 Dec]* 63
Nateq-Nuri Speech Views U.S. 'Pressure' *[Tehran Radio]* 63
Velayati Interviewed on Nuclear Program, Israel *[Paris Radio Monte Carlo]* 64
Official Reviews Income, Expenditure Targets *[IRNA]* 65
Majlis Urges Government To Ease Economic Development *[IRNA]* 66
Rafsanjani Leads Friday Prayers on al-Quds Day *[Tehran Radio]* 67
'Huge Crowds' Mark International Day of Quds *[IRNA]* 68
Sheykholeslam Views Jerusalem Day *[Tehran Radio]* 68
'Final Victory' Resolution Issued *[IRNA]* 70
Citizens To Have Identity Codes as of 'Next Year' *[IRNA]* 70
Construction of Oil Platform Nearly Complete *[IRNA]* 70

Pakistan

High Court Acquits 2 Persons in Blasphemy Case *[Islamabad Radio]* 70
Proposal To Reduce Defense Spending Criticized *[NAWA-I-WAQT 19 Feb]* 71
Editorial Urges Steps To Boost Air Defense *[JANG 23 Feb]* 71
Oil Minister: Gas Pipeline With Iran 'Vital' *[IRNA]* 71
Bhutto Inaugurates Karachi Hydrocracker Plant *[Islamabad International]* 72
Seismic Center Not To Monitor Nuclear Activity *[THE PAKISTAN OBSERVER 23 Feb]* 72
Loan Defaulting Companies Ordered To Liquidate *[Islamabad Radio]* 73
Editorial Urges 'Islamic World Order' *[NAWA-I-WAQT 19 Feb]* 73

Arab-Israeli Talks

Four-Way Ministerial Meeting on Refugees Postponed

JN2402070495 Amman Radio Jordan in English 0530 GMT 24 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A four-way meeting on Palestinian refugees will be held in Amman on March the sixth.

An Arab diplomat here said the four ministers of Jordan, Egypt, and Israel, and a senior Palestinian official were to meet next Sunday, but that the talks were postponed to the sixth of next month upon a request by Israel.

The four parties will discuss the fate of around 800,000 Palestinians who left their homes during the 1967 war.

Secret Israeli-Palestinian Meeting Near Stockholm Reported

BR2102162595 Stockholm SVENSKA DAGBLADET in Swedish 21 Feb 95 p 6

[Report by Cordelia Edvardsson: "Secret Meeting in Stockholm"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] At present Israel is making frenetic attempts to blow new life into the peace process with the Palestinians, at the same time as it is trying to defuse a serious diplomatic crisis with Egypt.

Over the weekend Israel's assistant foreign minister, Yosi Beilin, held secret talks with Yasir 'Arafat's chief negotiator, Nabil Sha'th, in the Stockholm area and in the course of this week Foreign Minister Shi'mon Peres will have a meeting with Egyptian President Husni Mubarak.

The meeting between Beilin and Sha'th was arranged by Sweden and was officially said to be about the latter's idea for a greenhouse installation in the Gaza Strip and Palestinian flower exports to Europe. This is of course "flowery language" at the highest level. The fact that the two Israeli academics, Ron Pundik and Yair Hirschfeld, took part in the talks indicates that these were possibly decisive political talks. The two academics have nothing to do with either aid or flower growing, but they did play a prominent role in the secret talks which preceded the Oslo agreement.

Their participation could indicate that what is now being discussed is a renegotiation of the almost totally paralyzed Oslo agreement. Beilin's own idea is after all to skip the agreement's "transitional phase" and move directly to negotiations on the permanent status of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. In the present context it should also be pointed out that PLO leader Yasir 'Arafat has called a meeting of the PLO's executive committee in Cairo today to discuss the state and the future of the Oslo agreement. [passage omitted]

Inter-Arab Affairs

UNSC Meeting Requested To Discuss Israeli Settlements

JN2302072895 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0600 GMT 23 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Arab group at the United Nations last night requested an urgent meeting of the UN Security Council to discuss the continuation of settlement activity in the occupied territories. Security Council members will consider this request today.

The PLO had earlier launched unofficial contacts with nonaligned countries on a draft resolution calling on Israel to immediately halt building and planning for settlements in the occupied territories, including Jerusalem.

Palestinian Affairs

Al-Tibi Says Time for 'Secret Talks' Agreement

TA2302181995 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1600 GMT 23 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Dr. Ahmad al-Tibi, senior adviser to Yasir 'Arafat, says that because of the slowdown in the implementation of the interim agreement with the Palestinians, the time has come to hold secret talks on the permanent settlement. He was speaking with reporter Dick Winter.

[Begin recording] [al-Tibi] We should consider the possibility of starting to negotiate on the final status. Now, I think that this idea should be considered parallel to the continuation in the implementation of the second phase of the interim phase, in parallel with the continuation of the implementation of the interim phase, redeployment, release of prisoners, elections, and silent talks about the permanent and final status, in order to shorten the phase of friction between both sides. There is a lot of friction, there is a lot of tension, there is a lot of lack of confidence between both sides.

[Winter] However, the whole concept of the Oslo accord was to begin with the easy and go to the hard. When you skip directly to the permanent settlement, which involves an explosive issue like Jerusalem, if the differences cannot be solved on the questions now, what makes you think they can be solved on these issues that are even more contentious?

[Al-Tibi] I never said that we should skip the interim phase. Different from others, I am saying that in parallel tracks, we should first implement the second phase of the interim agreement, but we should also, and at the same time, on a parallel track negotiate about the permanent status in order to shorten the interim phase, to lower the friction. [end recording]

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PA Secretary General on Peace Process, Opposition

TA2302065395 Gaza AL-HAYAH AL-JADIDAH in Arabic 20 Feb 95 p 14

[Interview with al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim, secretary general of the Palestinian Authority Presidency, by Samir Hamtu; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Hamtu] Will the negotiating situation remain deadlocked, and what is required?

['Abd-al-Rahim] We are exerting all our efforts to break the deadlock and remove the obstacles on this track. If the Israeli side continues to lay down obstacles and impediments, there will be deadlock. This requires us to act on other levels, including the international and Arab levels, in order to reassess the situation. The Israeli Government is now trying to avoid implementing the second part of the Oslo accord or the Declaration of Principles because of the upcoming Israeli elections.

[Hamtu] If the likud wins, can we say that the peace process will come to an end?

['Abd-al-Rahim] This is not only a Palestinian-Israeli agreement, it is an international agreement witnessed by the entire world. If we assume that the Likud would withdraw its approval of the agreement, this will harm the overall peace process in the region. Its effects will not be reflected on the Palestinian track only, but on all the tracks.

[Hamtu] On Thursday [16 February] Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin proposed the "Janin Second" plan to President 'Arafat. What are the details of this plan and the authority's stance on it?

['Abd-al-Rahim] The Israeli proposal is a forgery of what the National Authority [NA] had demanded and what the Israeli Government had proposed in the past. Taking over Janin and Bethlehem was proposed to us as a first step in the Israeli army's redeployment away from population centers. We agreed to this as a first step within a specified timetable and plan for the completion of redeployment in the West Bank. But what was proposed to us at the recent meeting last Thursday completely differed from what had been proposed to us and to which we had agreed. It was proposed to us that we take over economic and municipal affairs only, without the withdrawal of a single Israeli soldier or the entry of a single Palestinian policeman. This is not redeployment. What was proposed to us does not differ from the current situation, since the PLO is responsible for the municipalities and economic affairs. What the Israelis proposed to us was a forgery of the previous proposal. The NA will agree to redeployment in Janin and Bethlehem as a first step if it takes place within a timetable. The recent proposal, however, is totally rejected.

[Hamtu] What is the aim of the Israeli intransigence and procrastination in implementing the accord?

['Abd-al-Rahim] They want to renege on the Oslo accord. This accord is being subjected to a bitter attack by the Palestinian opposition which is not looking at the positive points in it. These points are epitomized by the unity of the people, unity of representation, and withdrawal from the territories occupied in 1967 in accordance with Resolution 242. This accord opens the door to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. I believe that the opposition will agree to the accord after one or two years, as has been the custom in the Palestinian arena.

[Hamtu] Do you believe that the opposition's view, which considers Gaza and Jericho to be first and last, has actually been realized in light of the current deadlock?

['Abd-al-Rahim] We reject this view. Perhaps some forces in Israel want Gaza and Jericho to be first and last, but we reject this. We are striving to implement the second part of the Declaration of Principles [DOP]. What they are saying is irresponsible. We have taken over powers, and we are present in the West Bank in one way or another, but not through the DOP's implementation, because the DOP provides for the entry of the Palestinian police, the Israeli army's withdrawal, and the holding of elections.

[Hamtu] How do you assess the NA's relationship with the Palestinian opposition?

['Abd-al-Rahim] There is an ongoing dialogue, and there have been some successes. True, the opposition forces have backed down from the agreements that we had reached with them, but we are insisting on holding this dialogue. [passage omitted]

[Hamtu] What will the NA do in the face of this deadlock in the peace process?

['Abd-al-Rahim] The NA must not halt the talks because that is an Israeli goal. At the same time, it should move on all levels. On the Palestinian level, it should conduct a comprehensive dialogue with Palestinian forces and factions. On the Arab level, it should explain to the Arab world the dangers of this stalemate on the Palestinian track, because the correct standard for gauging Israel's seriousness in its inclination toward peace is the amount of progress that is achieved on the Palestinian track. We will also move on the international level. The cosponsors of the agreement and the European countries should be urged to exert pressure on Israel to move forward on the road to peace, because the alternative is an explosion, and no one can predict its extent. We in the NA will go back to our point of reference, the PLO, to assess the situation and draw the lessons. At the same time, however, we always support the continuation of the talks so that Israel will not escape from paying the required dues. [passage omitted]

[Hamtu] Will pressure by human rights organizations and their challenge of the legality of the decision to form the state security court not force the NA to reconsider this decision?

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['Abd-al-Rahim] To date we have been under occupation, and the law applied in Gaza is Egyptian law. There is in this law something called the higher state security court. This is not a military tribunal.

[Hamtu] But this court is presided over by a senior officer who is assisted by other officers?

['Abd-al-Rahim] Nevertheless, this is not a military tribunal. There is a difference between it and a state security court. We have drug traffickers here as well as people who trade in spoiled food and who threaten the security of the state and the citizens. They murder individuals under the pretext of collaboration. We are in a transitional stage. When these cases are referred to a normal civilian judiciary, it could take two or three years. It is impossible to deal with these cases quickly in a transitional stage. The most dangerous thing that most frequently faces states is the transitional stage. For example, a member of the Abu-Nidal [Sabri al-Banna] group has been arrested for plotting to assassinate President Yasir 'Arafat. This man has been referred to a civilian court, but three months have passed and no progress has been achieved in the case. Perhaps, the court will not be able to prove the evidence, and consequently, the man will be released.

In addition, there are people who trade in spoiled food, medicine, and flour imported from Israel. The date for using these products expired in 1990. These people call Gaza the garbage bin of Israeli food. Should not those who trade in people's nourishment be deterred quickly and decisively?

To date, there are also some judges who are afraid and are not sure that the authority will protect them. If there is no strong authority that stands behind the judges, they will be confused and indecisive. For example, a problem occurred two months ago, and an individual entered the court and opened fire inside the court. The judges retired and refused to deal with the case. Despite this, I do not support military tribunals. Cases of smugglers, traders in people's nourishment, drug traffickers, and arms traders who seek to spark a civil war will be referred to the state security court. No political figure will ever be referred to this court.

[Hamtu] What is the fate of prisoners who have been detained merely because of their affiliation with a certain faction?

['Abd-al-Rahman] We deal with each case individually; that is, any member of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine who has carried out an act that affects the security and interests of the masses will be punished, including those who issued the orders to him. We will not punish a specific faction for a mistake committed by one individual, but we will arrest anyone who is connected to acts that the majority deems to have affected the higher interests of the people. Any citizen before any court has the right to appoint a lawyer to defend him. Freedom of political and organizational action is safeguarded for any Palestinian citizen. No person will be put on trial for his political or ideological opinions.

[Hamtu] The opposition adopted the method of armed struggle before and after the NA's arrival. It says that it is not a party to the agreement and that, consequently, it is not committed to giving up a right that it considers sacred and legitimate. Then how does the NA demand that the opposition not exercise this right?

['Abd-al-Rahman] First, in principle, the NA will not accept having any Palestinian claim that he will not abide by agreements signed by the PLO, because in word and deed the PLO is legitimate and is a reality. It represents the Palestinian people. Since the PLO has committed itself, everyone must respect those commitments. Deviation from them causes a problem that the NA, which was basically established by the PLO, should deal with carefully without losing the right of the legitimacy of dealing with the issue, because it is the party that is committed to the Israeli side. Since the NA is addressing this issue, it takes into account the sensitivities and peculiarities of the Palestinian situation. The NA has spent much time talking with the armed factions and on certain occasions has adopted some measures, but it should be clear to everyone that the NA has the legitimate, political, and legal right to punish any person that deviates from the commitments, especially if there are laws preventing this.

Second, the opposition is a minority. We have a lot of evidence to prove this. The minority should be subject to the majority, which has chosen this road. The minority must not try to convince us with its gross rejection and lack of commitment. If elections are held and it becomes certain that the NA and the forces allied with it have gained a majority, the opposition forces, which have their own strategy, should abide by the commitments; otherwise, the law will be applied to them. On the other hand, if Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] wins the upcoming elections and finds out that the best road is armed struggle and wishes to abolish the Oslo accord, it is free to do so. This is the will of the people, as is the case with the Likud in Israel. However, when Hamas declares that it will not participate in the elections while not representing the majority of the Palestinian people, the people have the right to compel any force opposing their interests to submit to those interests.

[Hamtu] But it has been noted that there is widespread popular support for the military operations that have been carried out?

['Abd-al-Rahim] There is also popular opposition. There are some people who fervently support those operations. There are opponents who say that the operations have harmed the implementation of the second part of the agreement, have brought about the blockade against our workers and cut off their livelihood, and have hampered the peace process.

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Our own calculations, as well as those of the rest of the world, say that military action must end with the existence of the peace process, but those who undertake this action want to derail and destroy the peace process. Unfortunately, the Israeli leadership is goaded by these operations and realizes their goals by imposing a siege and suspending the talks.

[Hamtu] With regard to the elections, the opposition is refusing to participate. Consequently, Fatah and some other parties will be the only participants. Will this not deprive the elections of legitimacy and credibility?

['Abd-al-Rahman] Anyone who wishes to participate in the democratic arena is welcome to do so. Those who do not want to participate because they fear the results, namely, those whose voice is stronger than their size, we will not force them to do so. So far, no faction has adopted any decisive decision on the issue of participating in the elections. Maybe only the Islamic Jihad has announced its boycott of the elections, but when Hamas and Islamic Jihad form a party, what will be its task? Naturally, it will be struggle by democratic means. Then, this party will participate in the elections. There are parties that do not wish to take part in the elections. They are free to do so, but in this way they will be subjecting themselves to isolation.

There is a tendency by some forces in Hamas to participate in the NA, and we encourage this tendency.

[Hamtu] Is this certain and official?

['Abd-al-Rahman] Yes, this is an official statement. There are currents within Hamas, such as the moderate current, which want to participate in the NA and the elections. [passage omitted]

Qaddumi Leaves Tunis for Baghdad To Meet Saddam

JN2402075395 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0600 GMT 24 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Faruq Qaddumi, head of the PLO Political Department, yesterday left Tunis for Baghdad where he will hold talks with Iraqi officials on inter-Arab relations and the Middle East peace process.

A source in Qaddumi's office also said that the Palestinian official will stop over in Amman and will leave for Baghdad today where he will meet in particular with Iraqi President Saddam Husayn.

In a statement issued in Cairo, the PLO called for an Arab summit and decided to hold contacts with the international community to end the impasse in the peace process.

DFLP Criticizes PLO Executive Committee Meeting

TA2302161395 Jerusalem AL-NAHAR in Arabic 23 Feb 95 pp 1, 7

[Statement issued by a DFLP official spokesman in Damascus; date not given] txt

[FBIS Translated Text] As was expected, the PLO Executive Committee meeting in Cairo, called by Yasir 'Arafat, failed to reach a quorum. The meeting was boycotted by Taysir Khalid and 'Abd-al-Rahim Malluh, representatives of the DFLP [Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine] and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine; Sulayman al-Najjab, representative of the Palestinian People's Party; and independent figures who had resigned from or suspended their membership in the committee: Mahmud Darwish, Shafiq al-Hut, and 'Abdallah Hurani. In addition, the meeting was boycotted by Faruq Qaddumi and Mahmud 'Abbas, the representatives of Fatah; and Mahmud Isma'il, representative of the Arab Liberation Front.

This extensive boycott is evidence of the widespread damage caused by the associates of the self-administration authority and the Oslo-Cairo deal to the bodies and 0?ed its decisions and regulations.

Moreover, approval by the Executive Committee members—who met in Cairo without a quorum—to continue the talks with the Israeli Government under the humiliating ceiling imposed by Yitzhaq Rabin, which is less than the Oslo-Cairo deal, proves the weakness of "the self-administration rule group" and its inability to adopt any independent decisions. Consequently, it is continuing on the road to political suicide.

The great majority of the Palestinian people are calling now for burying the Oslo-Cairo accord, which is on the brink of death, and for returning the situation to normal by the direct election of a national council and a Palestinian leadership. They are also calling for putting the negotiating process back on track on the basis of the Palestine National Council resolutions and the resolutions of Arab and international legitimacy.

DFLP's Hawatimah Proposes Alternative to Oslo Agreement

TA2402101595 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 24 Feb 95 p A4

[Report by Ori Nir]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Nayif Hawatimah, leader of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine [DFLP], proposes an alternative plan to the Oslo agreement. Its main points are: the election of a new Palestinian leadership and negotiations with Israel about permanent arrangements in the territories based on UN Resolutions 242, 338, and 194 (which awards the Palestinians "the right of return") aimed at establishing two states, one Israeli and the other Palestinian.

Hawatimah made this proposal two days ago in a speech broadcast by phone from Damascus to a rally marking the 26th anniversary of the establishment of the DFLP held at the al-Hakawati Theater in East Jerusalem. Hawatimah said that the DFLP must present an alternative in view of the complaints by Palestinian opposition members about the absence of an option to the Oslo

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agreement. "We present today a realistic and feasible alternative, which we are prepared to carry out," Hawatimah stated. Here are the main points of Hawatimah's proposal:

—Halting the negotiations regarding the Oslo agreement and holding a referendum about it under international supervision.

—Holding free political elections to choose a new leadership under international supervision (it was not mentioned whether the elections would be held in the territories only or also in the diaspora).

—The elected leadership would immediately engage in "comprehensive, historic, and balanced negotiations" based on UN Resolutions 242, 338, and 194. The negotiations would be based on the principle of a total halt to settlement activities and of self- determination to the Palestinians in the West Bank (including "Arab Jerusalem") and the Gaza Strip.

—Establishing two states for two peoples, coupled with a full Israeli withdrawal from the territories to the 4 June 1967 borders.

—Agreeing on a binding timetable for the gradual implementation of the agreement.

According to Hawatimah, the alternative he proposes is based on the principle of "full withdrawal in exchange for full peace, the right to self-definition, and a solution to the refugee problem in exchange for full peace—two states on the soil of historic Palestine." Hawatimah spiced his speech with statements mocking and deriding 'Arafat, but hardly criticized Israel. [passage omitted]

Hamas Spokesman Ghawshah Demands 'Arafat Dismissal

JN2302184695 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1615 GMT 23 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman—The Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, today demanded the dismissal of Yasir 'Arafat, chairman of the limited self-rule authority, after the failure of the Oslo accord, and the failure of negotiations on the Israeli-Palestinian track.

REUTER quoted Ibrahim Ghawshah, official spokesman for Hamas, as saying that the dismissal of 'Arafat would be a bold step. Moreover, such a step would return the trust to the Palestinian people, halt their agonies, reestablish national cohesion, and promote the struggle to achieve their objectives.

In his statement, Ghawshah demanded efforts to launch a parliament for the Palestinians inside and outside the Palestinian territories on the basis of free elections that would catapult into prominence a true leadership for the Palestinian people, one that would address all current issues, political plans, and popular demands. This is possible to achieve when there is a legitimate leadership, he noted.

Minister Says Hamas Election Ban 'Unacceptable'

AU2402101995 Vienna KURIER in German 24 Feb 95 p 4

["A.K."-initialed report: "PLO Advertising Campaign Started in Vienna"]

[FBIS Translated Text] "Economically, we are worse off than ever before: Before the autonomy talks started, Israel issued 120,000 work permits for Palestinians. Today it is only 10,000; and this only applies to times when they are not closing the borders. People from the Philippines and the Far East are, meanwhile, doing the jobs."

In an interview with KURIER, Palestinian Social Affairs Minister Intisar al-Wazir blamed the Israelis for the Palestinians' bleak social situation. Yet, she is confident about the first elections in the Palestinian territories. The Fatah, 'Arafat's party, expects to win over 50 percent of the votes. The PLO also welcomes the candidacy of the radical Hamas. The Israelis' demand that only those organizations that approve of the autonomy talks should be allowed to participate in the elections, is unacceptable. "After all, we cannot forbid the Israelis to let their opposition participate in the elections either." Al-Wazir is the widow of murdered 'Arafat intimate Abu Jihad. She is in Vienna at the moment, soliciting financial support for a social project. The PLO decided on 22 February to ask for international support.

Authority Begins Use of Palestinian Postage Stamps

JN2302170195 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 23 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Ministry of Post and Telecommunications in the [Palestinian Authority] has started using the first Palestinian postage stamp in the National Authority [NA] areas.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Hafiz al-Ashhab, NA minister of Post and Telecommunications, has said that the Palestinian postage stamp has been recognized by the Arab countries. It will soon be recognized by the other countries after getting the approval of two-thirds of the members of the Universal Postal Union.

Dr. al-Ashhab said that Palestinian mail will be distributed to the other Arab countries through Egypt under an agreement similar to that signed with Jordan. He said that this agreement will be signed after 'Id al-Fitr.

Report Says Israel Funding Immigration of Chechen Jews

JN2302155195 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1830 GMT 22 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A report in English prepared by the [Palestinian Authority's] Information Ministry warns against the arrival of Chechen Jews in Israel.

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The report accuses the Israeli Government of forcing the Jews in the former USSR to immigrate to the occupied territories. The Information Ministry report says this endangers the peace process.

The report entitled "Jewish Immigration to Palestine and its Ill- Omened results" says Israel is earmarking funds for settling the new immigrants in the occupied West Bank in spite of the Palestinian-Israeli Declaration of Principles and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin's statements in 1992 supporting a freeze on settlements.

Binyamin Begin, Knesset member from the Likud, described the report as a direct attack on Israel's existence.

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Algeria

Serkadji Prison Riot Death Tolls, Reaction Reported

Boumaarafi Said Among Instigators

LD2302144395 Rabat MAP in English 1351 GMT 23 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Algiers, Feb. 23 (MAP)—Some one hundred prisoners held in the Serkadji prison here were killed Tuesday [21 February] by security forces who were trying to quell a rebellion movement among inmates, according to the Algerian media which quoted 'well-informed sources'.

Algerian justice minister said four security agents were killed and did not give figures on the death toll among prisoners. Some 200 prisoners, mostly held for terrorism acts tried to escape the prison, said official sources, and [words indistinct] the failure of negotiations with the mutineers who took hostages among inmates, security agents attacked the rebel prisoners who also killed four guards.

A statement released by the Justice Ministry says the operation was successful and sought to spare hundreds of lives and bring back security to the penitentiary institution. The Algerian media reports that among the victims were Yekhlef Cherrati, a preacher, member of the outlawed Islamic Salvation Front 'FIS' and Lembarek Boumaarafi, suspected of having killed Algerian President Mohamed Boudiaf. According to the media, Boumaarafi, who was held there awaiting judgement, might be among the instigators of the mutiny. Among the prisoners there was also Abdelkader Hachani, former head of the FIS executive bureau. He was arrested in 1992 and has not been tried yet.

FIS Denounces 'Massacre' of Prisoners

LD2302152395 Tehran IRNA in English 1449 GMT 23 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Athens, Feb. 23, IRNA—The Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) Thursday [23 February] denounced the killing of over 100 prisoners in an Algerian jail yesterday as the military-backed regime's "treacherous revenge against the people."

"We strongly condemn and denounce the terrible and treacherous massacre against the defenceless prisoners in the Sirkadji prison in the heart of the Algerian capital," said a FIS statement faxed to the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) from Germany. The press release, issued in the name of FIS executive committee abroad, called for an "immediate and independent enquiry" into the massacre and urged international human rights organisations to condemn it.

"This collective murder is a treacherous revenge against the people for their rejection of the policy of carnage and the policy of instigating the people against each other," it said. FIS charged the military-backed regime of using heavy weapons and fighter planes to terrorize the population.

It said the Sirkadji killing, following the massacres of prisoners in two other jails of al-Harash and al-Barwaqiya, is a "clear evidence of the political bankruptcy of the military in Algeria which has nothing to offer except death and destruction."

According to the official Algerian version, security forces killed at least 95 jail inmates following a revolt by Islamist prisoners. Officials claimed prisoners armed with home made knives and other weapons took seven guard hostages, then began organizing an escape of up to 1,000 jailed Muslim activists.

In 1992, the pro-western Algerian regime cancelled general elections which FIS was poised to win, banned the party and jailed thousands of its supporters. The regime-backed militia have killed thousands of innocent people in three years of violence.

Authorities Say 96 Inmates Killed

LD2302200095 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 23 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Numerous reports have appeared on the mutiny which took place in Serkadji prison on Wednesday [22 February]. These came after the statement released by the Justice Ministry yesterday and which said that the intervention by the security forces and the prison warders had been a successful operation and resulted in a number of deaths and injuries.

Following an investigation, the Public Prosecution released a statement today identifying the victims and the nature of the crimes they committed and for which they were tried or for which they have not been tried yet. The death toll was put at 96, including 81 who were prosecuted in terrorist cases and the other 15 who were prosecuted in ordinary cases. Ten inmates were injured and two warders were injured, in addition to the four warders who were killed and whose death had already been announced.

According to the statement, the prison is totally calm and normal activity has resumed there after order was restored inside. The statement adds that the abovementioned figure, i.e 96 killed, is the correct one and that any other figure given does not correspond to that arrived at by the investigation [as heard].

Human Rights Body Urges Inquiry

LD2302214495 Paris Radio France International in French 1830 GMT 23 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Announcer] Algeria is in a state of shock following the put down of the escape attempt by the Islamists at Serkadji prison in Algiers. [passage omitted] Adala Benraad:

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[Benraad] [passage omitted] Many reactions have come in from the Islamists: the Islamic Salvation Army, the armed branch of the Islamic Salvation Front [FIS], has denounced the carnage and promised further violence for the end of Ramadan. According to Anouar Haddam [FIS leader in exile in the United States], this massacre puts an end to the hopes of a resolution of the conflict, and the head of the FIS delegation abroad is calling for a commission of inquiry to be set up.

The Justice Ministry has said that it has ordered this, in particular to explain how grenades and guns came to be in the hands of the mutineers.

[Announcer] This commission of inquiry announced by the Ministry of Justice does not satisfy the Algerian League for the Defense of Human Rights. Its chairman Maitre Abdennour is calling for an independent commission:

[Begin Abdennour recording] We know that many people died, there were many casualties. Relatives are turned away from the vicinity of the prison, lawyers cannot enter the prison, and no feasible information is being given out. So, in order to put an end to this very painful situation, we are calling first of all for the publication of a list of the victims to put an end to the deep and understandable distress of the families, and we are calling for the creation of a commission for the safeguarding of human rights, made up not of members of the administration, but independent Algerian public figures—to go to the prison with the utmost urgency to see and speak to the inmates and make public everything it has seen and heard. [end recording]

Zeroual Addresses Workers Union Rally

LD2302232095 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1930 GMT 23 Feb 95

[Speech by President Liamine Zeroual at UGTA rally in Hassi Messaoud on 23 February—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Mr. Secretary General of the Algerian General Workers Union [UGTA], dear workers. I am very happy to share with you the commemoration of the UGTA anniversary. The date of 24 February also constitutes a prominent reference in the process of the completion of our national sovereignty. On a day like this Algeria has recovered its energy-related resources to serve the construction and development of our country. [passage omitted]

There is no doubt that this UGTA conference is an example to the whole of Algerian society, particularly in the circumstances of the great challenges that it is experiencing today.

Brother workers: While I speak about great challenges, we all know that the commemoration of the 24 February anniversary is also marked this year with efforts and sacrifices. These sacrifices are the price that we must pay to get rid of the problems shaking our society and the trials facing our people, and to strengthen the national reconstruction process.

Brothers, I have already said that the take-off following the glorious November revolution, which our people knew how to use in the service of national construction, this take-off was regrettably obstructed later by deviations and demagogy. Thus, the difficulties and problems that have accumulated all through the years have failed to entail courageous and responsible reactions necessary to correct the situation. Quite the contrary, they led to the choosing of easy solutions, which in fact was nothing but a flight away from responsibilities. This, in our view, was the real cause of the sharp national crisis we are all witnessing today.

The uncontrollable resorting to foreign debts and the state's abandoning of its role in organizing development had increased the danger of the economic crisis. On the other hand, the political pluralism introduced in a chaotic manner with manipulations and maneuvers has gradually opened up the way to adventures at the expense of the Algerian people and its demand for democracy. There are now plenty of tragic examples of the consequences of the flight away from responsibilities. The national economy finds itself moving toward complete strangulation. The savage terrorism, guided by blind political egoism and fed by disappointment, this terrorism is targeting all the nation without distinction in life and property, and even in its dignity. These are the challenges facing the Algerian nation. Our nation has, however, the necessary resources to overcome such challenges and to free its abilities in order to boost such aspirations that should be at the level of the greatness of our country. These aspirations should, furthermore, be at the level of the sacrifices of our glorious martyrs. They are legitimate aspirations, which the noble Algerian people deserve.

However, we should reiterate here that such challenges and aspirations warrant tireless efforts and great sacrifices. We should know here that such efforts will be met with reaction. Therefore we must try to be firm in our endeavor in order to face up to those suicidal maneuvers and adventures by some people, inside or outside the country, who are disturbed by the efforts under way to redress the situation in Algeria.

Dear workers, despite the crises and tensions arising out of certain conditions, no matter how sharp they may be, the main challenge for Algeria is national development. In fact, the success of our development efforts will enable us to entrench the principles of the glorious November revolution, whether concerning social justice, democracy in the framework of our national values and in the light of stability and national unity, or even concerning the maintenance of our independence and sovereignty. National development remains the first guarantee for success; it eliminates the causes of disappointment and secures knowledge, this strong shield against ignorance. [passage omitted]

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Nonetheless, we must admit that as far as the economic level is concerned, our country finds itself facing a financial, managerial, and production crisis. [passage omitted]

Faced with this situation, we should be honest with ourselves and ask the following question: Is it possible to continue along the same track? This question is, however, addressed to all Algerians without exception for we are all citizens regardless of our social class. All workers, managers, and officials are all concerned here. They are all citizens in need of several services and in need, in particular, of guarantees regarding the future of their children. [passage omitted]

We must draw lessons from experience and recognize today that genuine economic reform passes through difficult but necessary reforms which, if undertaken too quickly or are badly carried out, will cost us a heavy price. We must also recognize that this reform must be done with the participation of all and with the mobilization of all our potential. We must finally recognize that this reform is going to be gradual and will take time. In fact, these reforms and these changes are harming some interests and some illegitimate incomes. This explains the hidden maneuvers we are witnessing, and which seek to sow the seeds of disappointment in workers' circles.

In reality, these maneuvers coincide with the sabotage of the national economy by means of the current savage terrorism in our country. The current economic problems and the economic future of the country cannot be tackled with empty slogans, but they require massive action and a great determination so as to bring about change. Our country has the possibilities to give substance to the change that passes through the sound management of our economy, and for which officials, no matter how senior they may be, will be accountable.

Change requires the elimination of incompetence, the rejection of waste. It also requires the use of all economic potential, whether public or private, and the attraction of foreign investments. But, at the same time, and because such a change will seek to be in line with the principles of our people and its glorious revolution, it will be encouraged in the framework of a firm adherence to national solidarity, social justice, and consultation. The state reiterates its commitment to this line.

Preserving the interest of the people in our development project does not mean avoiding change or its costs. Rather it means that we are very keen to promote national solidarity. The state will attach special interest to bringing about such solidarity. Likewise, defending the interests of the people does not mean abandoning the construction of its national future. Before anything it is seeking the strengthening of social justice for those who need it. Genuine social justice is at the heart of our preoccupation, a social justice exercised for the good of those in genuine need and not to feed a parasite economy. [passage omitted]

The line followed by our country is based on irreversible options: Revitalizing a continuous development, promoting a modern state in the service of all Algerians, entrenching true democracy through which the Algerian people will be exercising its full sovereignty without any patronage. This line and these options are at variance with any stagnation in all fields. Whatever the difficulties, the Algerian people bears such changes and difficulties with exemplary courage and dignity. In fact Algeria is on its feet despite all the aggressions and adventures directed against it, thanks to the courage and the spirit of resistance of all its people and its commitment, in all the regions. The workers are standing in the forefront of this resistance and this commitment. [passage omitted]

This resistance and this commitment are the real guarantees that Algeria will triumph over destruction and overcome the danger of paralysis. The state will always seek to strengthen and support this popular resistance and commitment by shouldering all its national responsibilities whether by relentlessly fighting terrorism or by exerting a sincere effort to bring together all the national potential in the service of national reconciliation, or by entrenching the sovereign will of the Algerian people.

We are determined to continue on this line in response to the aspirations of the Algerian people, which is asked to be master of its own national destiny, and which is expressing its position every day pending the date of the presidential elections. [applause]

The forthcoming presidential elections that are scheduled for this year will be the consecration of the political goal of the transitional period.

However, these elections are not a rejection of the dialogue as we have repeatedly been hearing. The national dialogue is something that we have always been ready for. It is something that we have been—and still are—supporting.

However, this dialogue requires partners who have the same readiness, the same conviction, and the same sincere determination to take the country out of its crisis without receiving anything in return.

Today, everyone knows the principles of the national dialogue, namely, the renunciation of violence and respect of the law.

Also, the aims of such a dialogue are very clear. Here we are taking about putting an end to the spilling of Algerian blood and the promotion of national concord and reconciliation, and the consecration of democracy for the sake of the Algerian people that has been faithful to its values, and which has been looking forward to progress and modernity.

Nonetheless, it will never be tolerated that the national dialogue will be used as a cover for calculations to take power regardless of the price, for stagnation, and worse still for foreign interference. These matters have been

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rejected and denounced by the Algerian people because it knows that it will be its main victim.

Thus, in the situation that the search for national consensus through dialogue has reached, the right is now being returned to the Algerian people—the right to impose their will directly and express their choice with all freedom and sovereignty. The Algerian people have the right to regain their distinguished position in this national dialogue and to attain their goals and ambitions.

This is the aim of the presidential elections that are to be held this year, and which will be a starting point for the process of re- establishing elected institutions in our country—institutions through which our people choose their representatives and exercise supervision over the proceedings. In particular, this is the basis of the democracy that everyone is calling for today.

So, any attempt to oppose the scope of the elections means a retrograde step or disregard for that democracy, which has become an irrevocable choice in Algeria. Resorting to the current difficulties, however harsh they may be, as a reason to reject the scheduled elections is merely to disregard the will and determination of the Algerian people, to remove the challenge, so that they can begin to emerge from the current crisis.

As I have repeatedly stated, it is true that the presidential elections will not be the solution to all our current political and security problems. Nonetheless, these elections will be a boost to the march of change and national re-evaluation.

The state has committed itself to providing good and possible conditions for free elections, which will be held in total openness and in the presence of international observers.

The state has also asked everyone to make his own contribution to the efforts of drawing up new electoral lists. The Algerian people has the right to be waiting for such a date in order to make its choice.

It is now up to everyone to shoulder his responsibilities at this fateful juncture. [passage omitted]

Trial of Suspected Boudiaf Killer To Begin Soon

LD1802174495 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 18 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Minister of Justice Mohamed Taguia announced today that the suspected killer of President Mohamed Boudiaf will be put on trial very soon. In an interview with the daily EL-MOUDJAHID, Mr. Taguia said that the trial had been postponed following an appeal by his lawyers against the prosecution decision on the type of court the trial should take place in. Mr. Mohamed Taguia affirmed that the Supreme Court recently examined the appeal.

It is worth mentioning that this appeal is a legal procedure given by the law to all parties. No party has the right to reject it unilaterally.

Second Lieutenant Lambarek Boumaarafi has been charged with the assassination of the late Mohamed Boudiaf on 29 June 1992 at Annaba' Cultural Hall.

Egypt

Israel's Peres, Mubarak Discuss Peace Process

NC2302104595 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1015 GMT 23 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 23 Feb (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has stated that during their meeting today Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres discussed with President Mubarak developments in the peace process, particularly on the Palestinian-Israeli track, and the nuclear program, which took up a significant part of the discussion. Musa added that it was agreed during the meeting to continue the talks between the two sides at the Foreign Ministry later today to come up with new ideas on these two topics. He pointed out that his discussion with Peres will continue to explore new ideas to give impetus to the peace proses. He hoped that an agreement will be reached to give momentum to the peace process.

Peres stated after the meeting that 'Amr Musa's statement represents a joint understanding between the two sides.

He said he spoke with President Mubarak on various important issues, noting that he will discuss these issues in greater detail during the talks he will hold with 'Amr Musa later today at the Egyptian Foreign Ministry.

He added: If we reach agreement, we will meet with President Mubarak to express the viewpoints on which we agree. Then we will hold a news conference to answer questions from international journalists.

Asked whether his visit to Egypt might erase the negative feelings that emerged because of recent statements by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin, Peres said: This issue was settled after my meeting with 'Amr Musa in Paris.

Musa, Peres Hold News Conference

NC2302151195 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1420 GMT 23 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 23 Feb (MENA)—Egyptian and Israeli Foreign Ministers 'Amr Musa and Shim'on Peres have stressed the need for achieving peace in the Middle East since this would constitute the basis for establishing strong relations among the region's states. This came in a joint news conference the two ministers held today at the end of the Israeli minister's visit to Egypt.

Musa affirmed that security is also considered a basis for achieving good, strong relations. Musa said that his talks with Peres dealt with the following topics: the dispute between the two countries, the peace process, Israel's

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nuclear program, and the means to resolve the problems and assess the regional situation.

Musa added: We agreed on certain points and disagreed over others. However, contacts and consultations will continue through various channels. Musa pointed out that they agreed on the need to consolidate the peace process and hold further contacts and exchange ideas over the next few weeks. The foreign minister stressed that Egypt's position concerning the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT] has delineated the Egyptian viewpoint. Musa said: We will hold serious discussions with Israel concerning this issue which causes us concern.

'Amr Musa said that the signing of the treaty is the right of every country. But we are talking about Israel's nuclear program and not the signing of the treaty. He said that Israel's participating in the treaty is an Egyptian concern because when we talk about the treaty as a global issue it must be signed by all the world countries.

The foreign minister said that the talks also dealt with the Palestinian-Israeli track. He added that Peres contacted Palestinian chief negotiator Dr. Nabil Sha'th on the issue.

The foreign minister stressed the importance of continuing the peace process because without peace there can be no development or stability in the region.

'Amr Musa said the differences between Egypt and Israel do not mean that the relationship should be described in terms that are strange to our concept in the Middle East. He called for a deeper understanding of this region. He noted that the relations between Egypt and Israel permit frank and direct discussions and exchanges of views.

Musa said that it is possible that an agreement on the signing of the NPT will be reached before April. He said Egypt has a position and Israel has a position. We must expect all possibilities. We will deal with these possibilities in time.

For his part, Peres explained that intensive discussions were held on several issues, including economic cooperation. He said we have reached agreement on some points pertaining to the NPT and we have agreed to continue the discussion. He added that he believes in the importance of continuing the peace process and that President Mubarak, Egypt, and the Egyptian Foreign Ministry are partners in the peace process.

Peres said measures will be taken to ease the suffering of the Palestinian people in Gaza. We have allowed 10,000 workers from Gaza and 5,000 workers from the West Bank to enter Israel.

Peres affirmed that the main issue is security. He said Israel signed a peace treaty with Egypt. There is an Israeli pledge of non-aggression. Israel is interested in maintaining peace with Egypt.

Peres Leaves Cairo

NC2302141495 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1405 GMT 23 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 23 Feb (MENA)—Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres left Cairo this afternoon at the end of a short visit to Egypt. President Husni Mubarak met Peres this morning. The Israeli minister also held talks with Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa during the visit.

Al-Baz Rejects 'Indefinite' Extension of NPT

NC2302190895 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1615 GMT 23 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Alexandria, 23 Feb (MENA)—Dr. Usamah al-Baz, first Foreign Ministry under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs, has stated that Egypt is qualified historically, geographically, and culturally to play a role extending beyond its historic borders. He said that reports that Egypt will have a down-sized role in the post-peace era and will have to contend with new rivals are absurd and incorrect.

Today, in a speech before the teaching staff and students of the College of Law at Alexandria University, al-Baz said Egypt's economic problems will be overcome thanks to the wise economic reform policy. He noted that Egypt has its sources of power, above all its manpower represented by the young generations who are a quantitative and qualitative force. He explained that the number of graduates in the fields of engineering, medicine, and law in Egypt annually is greater than the total number of graduates in Israel since its inception. He also explained that Egypt possesses the cultural, intellectual, political, and geographical potentials to play a leading a role in the region.

Al-Baz said the phase of protecting peace is graver than the phase of peace itself. This renders Egypt's role in the coming phase more vital and important. He said that Egypt's leading role began before peace and will continue after peace because it believes that real peace meets Arab and non-Arab interests. He added that Egypt does not seek to form small blocs or a certain axis because this method harms all of us. He affirmed that Egypt's role is to link these small Arab blocs under the umbrella of the Arab League.

On Egypt's relations with the Arab Maghreb Union [UMA], al-Baz said Egypt did not ask to join the UMA but asked to attend as an observer. He explained that Egypt is the link between the Arab East and the Arab Maghreb.

On the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT] and Egypt's stance on its extension, al-Baz said that if we are going to establish a new society in the Middle East, then this requires a measure of equal security in the region according to which all the parties must shoulder the same obligations.

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He noted that a conference will be held in April to discuss the extension of the NPT. The conference will be an opportunity for us to speak about this agreement. He affirmed that the time has come for all the states of the region, including Israel, to sign the NPT.

Al-Baz said that Egypt is bringing up the issue of the NPT and Israel's signing of it not to weaken Israel, but to protect Arab national security. He referred to Egypt's call for the removal of weapons of mass destruction from the Middle East and to President Mubarak's April 1990 initiative on this regard. He affirmed the need for Israel to carry out a move parallel to the Arab move.

Al-Baz said the Israelis say they will not be the first to use nuclear weapons but this promise does not prevent them from producing, developing, and stockpiling these weapons. Moreover, they can go back on this promise later on. He affirmed the need for Israel to sign the NPT, to accept inspection of its nuclear installations, and to turn its military capability in this field to civilian purposes. He explained that Egypt rejects the indefinite extension of the NPT. The NPT should be valid for a specific period, noting that this requires unified Arab activity to achieve Arab national security.

Al-Baz said Egypt's relations with the Arab countries are not based on the principle of pressure because each Arab country has what we have in terms of the requirements of Arab national security. He affirmed that Egypt does not bend under pressure and is not prepared to accept any pressure from any state because it is not a satellite state.

Al-Baz noted that several states are offering aid to Egypt because it has an economic reform program. It is in the world's interest that Egypt remain a stable country because its stability strengthens the stability and security of the region. He noted that several European countries do not consider Egypt's stance on the NPT inflexible.

Al-Baz called for the formulation of a wise and objective picture of Egypt in the coming phase, especially as we are on the threshold of the 21st century. He said we are trying to rebuild Egypt to enable it to continue the march of democracy and progress. He called on the youths to define a new perception different from the perception of the previous generations. He affirmed that the current generation of Egyptian youths has political and intellectual awareness.

'Arafat Arrives From Saudi Arabia on Short Visit

NC2402060995 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 0500 GMT 24 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat arrived in Cairo from Saudi Arabia this morning on a visit of several hours.

During their meeting in Mecca, President 'Arafat briefed the custodian of the two holy mosques, King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, on developments in the peace process on the Palestinian track and the difficulties it is facing, in addition to the Palestinians' conditions in the occupied territories.

'Arafat Leaves for Gaza

NC2402101595 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0945 GMT 24 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 24 Feb (MENA)—Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat left for al-'Arish this morning en route to Gaza following a stopover in Cairo that lasted several hours. He arrived in Cairo from Saudi Arabia last night.

U.S. Stance on 'Terror,' Nuclear Treaty Viewed

NC2302123395 Cairo AKHBAR AL-YAWM in Arabic 18 Feb 95 pp 1, 8

[Article by chief editor Ibrahim Sa'dah: "The New World Lie!"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The East-West Cold War ended with the collapse of the communist bloc and the disintegration of the Soviet Union into states and statelets all of them ready to pounce on each other. The United States imagined that by this devastating "victory" over the communist regimes, "the enemies of liberty and democracy," it had become the first and only power on the planet, able to establish a new world without wars or conflicts!

The new world turned out to be worse than the old one. Wars erupted in more than one area. The other nations looked up to see what the leader of the new world would do to restore peace and human rights. They were surprised to find out that the United States had more than one set of scales and more than one set of criteria to measure each war or conflict. It would handle each one separately and in line with strange, incomprehensible considerations. [passage omitted]

The ugliness of the new world—the glad tidings of which were brought to us by the United States—was not limited to intervention only in those countries in which it had vital interests. We were also surprised to discover that the world's leader did not refrain from assisting terrorist activity or backing it physically and morally so that it would spread in many countries that the United States regarded as its friends! [passage omitted]

The United States interfered in Iran's most private domestic affairs during the shah's era. In those days it boasted of strong, close ties between the two countries but at the same time it got in touch with opposition groups, which were exploiting the Iranian Government's corruption, to overthrow it and seize power. Traditional U.S. opportunism believes that developing countries are not fit for domestic stability and, consequently, the U.S. Administration must do two things: strengthen its relations with the existing governments at the same time as establishing contacts with the opposition to guard against eventualities.

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Apparently Khomeyni's group was not satisfied with the tenuous link the United States wished to establish with it. Consequently Washington did not get from the regime of Khomeyni's ayatollahs the response it expected. Relations between the two countries deteriorated fast and, today, Tehran insists on calling the United States "satan."

So as not to repeat the "mistake" in other countries, new aspects were added to traditional U.S. opportunism. We now see a strange eagerness to promote contacts with every terrorist group that wishes to seize power in its own country. We see how U.S. territory has turned into a safe haven for terrorist leaders and the killers of innocent people. They escaped there by the skin of their teeth before they could be arrested in their countries and put on trial for their crimes against their own people.

The picture is now uglier.

The fugitives—killers of innocent people—are living like millionaires and moving publicly and with total ease inside the United States within sight and hearing of the U.S. security agencies, which usually boast that they can hear a crawling insect pass. Those "leaders" are issuing assassination orders from their U.S. resorts so that the worshippers of money in Algiers or Egypt—and other countries plagued by terrorism—can immediately implement them. The U.S. Administration does not bat an eyelid. Checks covered with the blood of innocent victims flow from the credit accounts of the "amirs" of terror in the United States, pass through official banks, and reach the "workers" in the plagued countries in return for their successful bombings and their physical elimination of the amirs' opponents. The Washington administration's only comment is that it does not interfere in the domestic affairs of friendly countries and that the governments of these countries must shoulder responsibility for security and stability within their own borders.

There might be nothing new in the above. The only new thing is that the new world's leader has woken up—very late indeed—to the dangers of terrorism after suffering from the terrorist actions of those it had—until very recently—welcomed and sheltered and to whose growing assets in banks it had turned a blind eye. Had it not been for the discovery of the role of its dear "guests," the killers of innocent people, in the series of explosions they planned and carried out inside the biggest American cities, President Bill Clinton would not have been scared and we would not have heard him last week threaten to chase terrorism not only inside the United States, but in all five continents.

The same terror spread swiftly from the United States to Europe. French President Francois Mitterrand proposed to the European Union—now that his country is facing the threat of terrorism spreading to it—to intervene to end terrorism in Algeria. The Algerian president immediately rejected this and accused the French president of blatant interference in Algeria's internal affairs.

NATO, which has become useless following the capitulation and taming of what used to be called until very recently the communist camp, said through its secretary general that NATO's new conflict will be against what he called "Islamic" terrorism, which he described as more dangerous to the free world than the former Soviet threat.

NATO was not content with these statements; following meetings of the 16 member states' ambassadors, it hastened to state its intention to enter into a "dialogue" with five [figure as published] countries in North Africa and the Middle East—Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania, Egypt, and Israel—with the aim of drawing up a joint strategy against "Islamic" extremism. The NATO spokesman said that this dialogue will not be limited to these countries but could expand to include other concerned countries. The aim behind this expected strategy is to prevent an extremist country—such as Iran or Libya—from obtaining a nuclear force from one of the fragmented countries of the Soviet Union.

How strange is this proposal. The new world led by the United States, which used to shed tears over terrorists and killers who hid behind Islam to justify their crimes and that gave the fugitives among them shelter and care in Europe and the United States, is the same world that is now trying to create a war, not against the gangs of murder and terrorism, which would have been eliminated at birth had it not been for the support of Washington, London, Bonn, and Paris, but against Islamic countries on the pretext that these countries are responsible for extremism and are planning to spread terrorism in the world through the acquisition of a nuclear force.

The new world's leaders have ignored the grinding crisis between an Islamic country, Egypt, on one side and the United States and Israel on the other for no reason other than President Husni Mubarak's long-standing call to make the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and his refusal to sign the treaty banning these weapons if Israel does not sign. Israel is insisting on not signing, but demanding that Egypt sign. The amazing thing is that the new world's leader accepts the view of its foster child Israel and is exerting pressure on Egypt to convince it to sign.

How fair is the new world's leader?!

Clinton Said Using Mideast for Second-Term Bid

NC2302121595 Cairo AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 16 Feb 95 pp 1, 3

[Article by chief editor Mahfuz al-Ansari: "Clinton and the Unacceptable Deal!! Striking at the Resistance for a Fee?!"; all punctuation as published]

[FBIS Translated Text] It is the right of U.S. President Bill Clinton to choose the way by which he can serve his own interests. It is also his right to "ride" the wave or the horse that will carry him to the White House on a second presidential term, beginning November next year. Perhaps the sole "racing horse," and the only one left for the

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U.S. President to stay atop the No. 1 seat, is the "Middle East and its peace." This is particularly true since his "social" projects have gone astray; he has abandoned his "campaign" programs; the dreams of welfare and plans to extend the umbrella of health care, education, housing, and food to cover the needy 30 million Americans have collapsed; and the American people have voted against him, his administration, and his policy and have handed the "Congress" to the Republicans in an unprecedented majority.

So, if it is true that the "Middle East peace" is Clinton's option, decision, and "horse" to break the impossible and overcome the obstacles and barriers, then we can appreciate his reasons for clinging tight to the shreds of this "torn" paper called the "peace process." We also can realize the reasons for his insistence on catching or "hanging" onto the wagon of every accomplishment made on all tracks of the "crisis." For there he is trying to capitalize on President Mubarak's initiative and using it to his own favor. Mubarak called for a four-way summit in Cairo grouping 'Arafat, Husayn, and Rabin under the patronage and in the presence of the president. This was an unprecedented initiative and an unexpected meeting. Then Clinton, jumping at the occasion, invited the foreign ministers of the four parties to the Cairo summit to a meeting in Washington under his patronage and in his presence, along with Vice President Al Gore and Secretary of State Warren Christopher. It was the same person, Clinton, who turned the Oslo Agreement—the Gaza- Jericho Agreement between the Palestinians and Israelis—into a "self-demonstration." He asked that the agreement be initialed. He then asked that it be signed under the "suns" of the U.S. media and its cameras on the White House lawn with him and his guests from the "parties to the agreement" in attendance. He did not leave a single living U.S. President or a "key" U.S. policy figure without inviting him to the "festival." The signing ceremony grouping 'Arafat and Rabin on this historic occasion turned into a ceremony for honoring and exalting the "peace hero Clinton!," while news reports indicated that he and his administration were detached from the secret talks and the preliminary agreements signed in Oslo that led to the signing of the agreement. The U.S. President's approach to the Jordanian-Israeli Agreement has not been different from that of the Rabin-'Arafat agreement. The only difference was the venue of the agreement. Clinton moved to the region, to "Jordan's al-'Aqabah." Naturally, the whole region staged a "wedding procession" from the moment he set out from Washington until he reached the wedding "altar," passing through a number of regional countries, including Egypt. Clinton attended the ceremony, attracted the limelight, drew the attention and the cameras, and signed along with the parties concerned not as a "godfather," but as the bride's father!!

We support the U.S. President if the Middle East peace is his route to the top on condition that it is real peace.

There is no objection to or rejection of his insistence on serious participation in the peace processes, tracks, and even their festivals, both the real and fabricated ones. On the contrary, we want and demand his intervention and his participation and that of his country.

We support his right to "adapt" the method of his Democratic predecessor, President Carter, to sit down and listen to him to learn the "tricks of the trade" and to achieve what Carter achieved. Each one of them will have his reward for what he is doing and achieving.

"Carter" entered world history through the "impossible door" when he brought al-Sadat and Begin together at Camp David and the first Arab-Israeli peace agreement between Egypt and Israel was signed through his efforts.

The door of history is open today before Clinton if he achieves the second impossibility, namely that of ending the "Arab-Israeli conflict," and makes peace prevail in the region, even if this happens on one front at a time: the Palestinian, then the Jordanian, then the Syrian, and then the Lebanese.

But if Clinton has the right to adapt or borrow the method and policies of others and to listen to their experiences, then it is our right to shed light on some matters that distinguish the actions of Carter and Clinton and separate their stances and the way they deal.

A minor "touch of doubt" blemished President Carter's stance as he was working for the Egyptian-Israeli peace, the doubt of a "bias" toward Israel. But this "touch" of sympathy for or submission to Israel's demands and "Begin's hammers" was merely a natural thing and an automatic behavior of the firm U.S. stance of bias toward and support for Israel. But despite this, both Carter, through his shrewdness, and his Secretary of State "Cyrus Vance," through his expertise, honesty, and wisdom, succeeded in bringing this "bias" and this special relationship—which depends on "favoritism" and blind support for all that Israel says, does, and proposes—to its minimum level.

Both Carter and Vance realized that any acute imbalance in the agreement; any "unfairness" to the Egyptian rights; any excessive pressure on President al-Sadat; and any loss of Egyptian territories, even of a single inch; would mean a "divorce," the collapse of any agreement concluded, and the signing of a deal of discord and divorce. Any blatant action against Egypt's rights and the Palestinians' rights was unacceptable. Thus the two Camp David agreements' frameworks were balanced to a large extent, especially with regard to their contents and even to the issue of settlements.

What is happening now is to a large degree contrary to the "spirit" with which Carter and Vance played their role and their participation.

President Clinton's bias is clear and shows in every one of his actions, despite the fact that his role is easier since he is completing the role begun by the predecessor, the existence of pledges, treaties, and agreements signed by Israel whose ink has not yet dried, all the international

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and regional changes, and all the gains and acceptances that Israel has gotten in the region, not the least of which is the "excessive" flights of Israeli Prime Minister Rabin's plane that is landing and taking off from a number of Arab capitals.

If we want to "dig up" or "delve" into this point about the bias and ineffectiveness, then we must stop at this "conference," which Clinton personally called for in the wake of the four-way summit and which was attended by ministers from Egypt, the United States, Israel, Jordan, and Palestine, and the Russian deputy foreign minister.

Before talking about the ministers' meeting in Washington, we will recall the aims of the leaders' summit in Cairo, which Mubarak called for.

When the president saw that "peace was receding," violence escalating, the "political language" coming from Tel Aviv threatening of war, the peace negotiations stopping, the contacts ceasing, and the clauses of signed agreements and treaties not being implemented, he intervened to create a "breakthrough" that would change the situation, build bridges of understanding, and restore confidence and thus enable the parties to talk, negotiate, and act.

In his call for the quadripartite summit in Cairo along with its various extensions, President Mubarak's vision and objectives were neither general nor out of the blue. His call was a clear vision with very specific goals dealing with tangibles, problems, and obstacles, be they relating to the redeployment of the Israeli troops, setting the date for elections in the self-rule areas, or expanding the scope of the Palestinian self-rule authority to the rest of the territories according to the schedule agreed upon in Oslo and detailed in the executive Cairo agreement. President Mubarak's vision was very clear with respect to halting settlement-building and bringing in more settlers, stopping the ongoing judaization of Jerusalem and declaring it a united capital in violation of the signed agreements, and declaring the region a nuclear-free zone by making all countries in it join the "club"—that is, the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty—and submit to its requirements for supervision and inspection. All of these were the reasons, and at the same time they were the objectives.

The suicide operation in Netanya was not the reason; the settlement policy was, as was the policy of annexation and violation of treaties and agreements. This is why the Palestinians violated their "calmness." The continued settlement-building in Jerusalem and construction the defense fortresses on its northwestern suburbs, along the same lines as the old crusader castles, is what gave the Palestinians the feeling that the "peace agreement" of Oslo, Washington, and Cairo between them and the Israelis is no more than a big trick in whose shadow, and the shadow of the security and coexistence it created, the Israelis carry out their objectives of annexation, expulsion, judaization, and hegemony. So they rebelled, became extremist, and used violence.

This is a typical and constant Palestinian reaction when they are feeling cheated and oppressed.

This was Cairo's view, and highlighting this point was President Mubarak's objective when he called for the quadripartite summit.

The idea was that the ministerial meeting in Washington would finalize what the Cairo summit did not accomplish. The belief was that the Washington meeting would resolve what was still pending from the Cairo summit.

The belief was that the U.S. president's participation in the meetings would establish justice, eliminate oppression, tell the mistaken party that they were mistaken, and allocate responsibility for retracting from the peace process to the right parties.

What happened was very different. President Clinton condensed the whole issue into a loser's deal. He saw the whole issue like a deal. Clinton summarized the situation as an "aggression" on the security of the Israelis and that peace and security must be restored to the peace-loving Israelis. In other words, he implied that there are some people who are disturbing the peaceful life in Israel and the occupied territories and that we have to get rid of those "murderers" who are attacking the doves and lambs.

Clinton implied that he is ready to pay for whoever rids him of, or extricates, these terrorists so that the Israeli citizen can live, sleep, and move in peace; so that his peaceful life or his peace of mind are not disturbed by the nightmare of aggression and violence.

Clinton did not find anything to add to the agenda of the meeting, which consisted of the one item he discussed, which is that he wants to "hire a thug" to do this job for him.

The strange point is that he thought this thug is no other than the PLO and its leader, and the Palestinian Authority that governs Gaza.

As the American newspaper "THE WASHINGTON POST" says, President Clinton addressed only the economic aspect of the crisis and the relations between this aspect and violence and terrorism.

The paper added that this is why he declared the need to offer urgent economic aid to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and that his country is ready to move fast to establish economic development in this region. He added that this could restore confidence and open the doors of cooperation to prove that peace has economic benefits.

The newspaper says that the president affirmed his readiness to multiply efforts and exert all his energy with a group other than us to eliminate terrorism.

But there is another point here other than the two elements of the deal: economic aid or finances to be given to the Palestinian Authority in return for eliminating terrorism and oppressing the terrorists.

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The main point is that Peres confirmed the same point when the meetings of the conference ended. He also asserted that they did not discuss any issue other than eliminating terrorists in return for financial support.

This understanding of the "crisis" on the part of President Clinton cannot lead to any progress, contribute toward solving the problem, or help find a way out of the crisis.

In essence, it strengthens Israel's ability to impose oppression and expand its territories at the expense of the Palestinians. It encourages Israel to apply the policy of separation and fence- building. It bolsters Israel's superiority and supports its monopoly of nuclear weapons, while stripping the others even of their "sticks" of legitimate self-defense.

Such policies and stances do not make peace. They do not open markets or extend bridges of understanding, cooperation, and confidence.

They are no good for Clinton to use as a card for the coming presidential battle.

They are also not good for him to record his name in the list of great achievers in the history of mankind.

Papers Discuss NPT, Israeli Anti-Egypt 'Campaign'

NC1902095595 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0725 GMT 19 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 19 Feb (MENA)—Cairo newspapers say today that Egypt's call on Israel to join the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT] represents the unified Arab view on the issue and is an opportunity for Israel to show its good intentions and build bridges of trust that will make the region's countries enjoy a feeling of real security.

AL-AHRAM says that Israel sought to provoke a dispute with Egypt because the latter raised the question of regional nuclear armament and tried to place the issue in its proper perspective since the peace in the region is meant to be a real peace.

The paper notes that when Egypt asked Israel to reconsider its position on the nuclear issue to give the Arab countries a measure of reassurance, Israel started a media and official campaign against Egypt instead of beginning a discussion with it about the issue at hand.

AL-AHRAM expresses the belief that Israel imagined that Egypt was exerting pressure on it, although Egypt was only carrying out its principled, pan-Arab role over which it cannot bargain. The paper remarks that fearing the consequences of this Arab stance, Israel hastened to launch a media and political onslaught against Egypt.

AL-AKHBAR says that Israel's refusal to sign the NPT means that Tel Aviv's professions of peace and its declared desire to open a new chapter of relations with the Arabs is mere empty talk. It says that what makes matters worse is Israel's failure to fulfill its commitments as outlined in the agreement it signed with the Palestinians.

The paper points out that Israel's positions, and the actions of Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin in the past few days, reveal a confusion and a psychological uncertainty that have produced strange statements and frenzied reactions. AL-AKHBAR says that these reactions and statements were a consequence of the predicament in which President Husni Mubarak placed Rabin through his call to turn the Middle East into a nuclear-free zone.

The paper notes that Mubarak's assertion that unless Israel signs the NPT, Egypt and other Arab countries will not sign it has been understood by most Western nations, particularly the United States. This became apparent after President Mubarak refuted the false accusations made against Egypt and explained that it will not feel secure as long as a neighboring country refuses to sign the NPT.

The opposition AL-WAFD newspaper, mouthpiece of the Wafd Party, wonders who stands to gain from the current strange axis of powers that assaults Egypt and demands that Israel be given the opportunity to be the only state with nuclear weapons in the Middle East.

The paper declares: We expected Europe to back Egypt's stance. Exerting pressure on Egypt and forcing it to sign the NPT might drive it, and other countries, to seek to acquire weapons of mass destruction by clandestine means, something which we reject on humanitarian grounds.

The paper affirms that Egypt seeks full peace, not a peace that allows one side to dominate the other regardless of how many treaties or charters are signed. AL-WAFD notes that the people of no country are willing, merely for the sake of a certain treaty, to offer their safety and security on a gold plate to another country that possesses such weapons.

The paper says that either all the concerned parties sign the treaty together, or the countries that back Israel must be held fully responsible for the consequences.

The newspaper AL-JUMHURIYAH declares that Egypt's firm position on the NPT comes after the concept of peace has become established in the Middle East, a region of vital importance to the world. It remarks that the world is sure of the Egyptian and Arab commitment to a just and comprehensive peace and their desire to create appropriate circumstances for a better future for the region.

The paper declares that the region's countries can never feel really secure as long as Israel possesses a nuclear arsenal of unknown potency that is not subject to international inspection and control.

Al-JUMHURIYAH cites Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa's statement in Paris that Israel's refusal to sign the NPT will have dire consequences for the region's political climate.

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The paper adds that observers are following with great attention the developments in this issue and the results of the current contacts over it. It says that the observers hope that Israel will comply with the international desire to sign the treaty, particularly as Iran, which Israel uses as an excuse not to sign, is actually an NPT signatory.

MB Spokesman Denies Links to 'Terrorism'

NC2302201795 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic 15 Feb 95 p 9

[Interview with MB official spokesman Ma'mun al-Hudaybi by unidentified correspondent; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [AL-WAFD] You are accused of sympathizing with terrorism and terrorists.

[Al-Hudaybi] This is absurd. It is all lies. All our work is done in public and our situation is known to all the intelligence services. Several terrorist cases were referred to the judiciary over the past 20 years. Verdicts were passed against these cases in which none of the MB [Muslim Brotherhood] members was involved or indicted. Therefore, how could they accuse us of supporting terrorism? Also, after the killing of terrorist Tal'at Hammam, Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi said that the MB has nothing to do with terrorism or acts of violence. In brief, the state seeks to incite a campaign against us every now and then in order to justify all its oppressive measures against us.

[AL-WAFD] You are accused of joining the MB's international organization.

[Al-Hudaybi] The MB's international organization is made up of Muslims who meet during congresses to discuss the issues of Islam and Muslims. Is this unlawful? Is it lawful to attend an international fashion show? Why is only Islam prohibited? Am I not supposed to attend conferences and discuss Muslim problems? Am I allowed to travel but not to talk to anyone?

[AL-WAFD] You are accused of trying to dominate the MB.

[Al-Hudaybi] This is not true. I have never entertained such plans. Furthermore, nobody can dominate the MB. If all the previous governments had failed to control it, how could one person dominate it?

[AL-WAFD] You are charged with trying to assume power.

[Al-Hudaybi] We call on the government to abide by the provisions of the Islamic shari'ah and all other provisions of religion when handling the domestic and foreign policies as well as all issues affecting the homeland. This is the duty of the Muslim ruler and Egypt is an Islamic country and 95 percent of its inhabitants are Muslims. Certainly, the Egyptian people wish to be ruled by Islam and the government must abide by the principles and values of Islam. This can be done by promoting Islam, wisdom, and good preaching. We will follow anyone who works to achieve this. We will also follow any government, including the current one, if it attempts to abide by the principles of Islam. However, we implore God Almighty to keep us away from power.

[AL-WAFD] How do you explain the recent attack on the MB?

[Al-Hudaybi] The government is fighting any internal force that is against the normalization process. We are against the normalization of relations with Israel. Furthermore, this is an election year and the government wants its representatives to succeed at any cost. The battle started with the change of the professional associations law. The government is attacking the MB to guarantee good results in the elections.

MB's Mashhur Denies Accord With Extremist Groups

NC2202205995 Cairo AL-AHALI in Arabic 15 Feb 95 p 8

[FBIS Translated Text] Mustafa Mashhur, deputy guide of the Muslim Brotherhood [MB], has dismissed reports, which talked about an agreement between the MB and the Islamic extremist groups, that stated that the extremists will support the MB during the upcoming general elections. Mashhur denied any relationship or agreement between the MB and these groups.

The MB official explained the objective behind the recent campaign of arrests against some MB leaders. He said that the campaign is a precautionary measure by the government after the MB's successes in the professional associations elections.

Mashhur said that his membership in the Constituent Council, which was in charge of the MB's Special Order before the revolution, does not mean that he is an extremist or that he supports violence. He said that the Special Order was founded for a noble cause: resisting the Zionist gangs in Palestine and the British in Egypt.

Mustafa Mashhur denied that he is the MB general guide. He stressed that he is the deputy guide implementing the general guide's instructions. Mashhur said that the groups have not defined the type of future coordination. He said that the alliance is still ambiguous, noting that the previous Islamic alliance continues to exist under its previous conditions.

Prime Minister on Allowances, Investment, 'Terrorism'

NC2202205395 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 22 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Prime Minister Dr. 'Atif Sidqi has announced that the government employees will be given a new social allowance when the new state general budget takes effect. The allowance will equal the inflation rate to help the employees cope with the burdens of the

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rising cost of living and as part of the trend to increase the state civil servants' salaries to allay the people's burdens. The increase will take effect at the beginning of the new fiscal year. This came in Sidqi's comment in the report on the deliberations of the People's Assembly, prepared by the committee charged with replying to the government policy statement, which Dr. Sidqi delivered at the People's Assembly on 31 December.

Dr. Sidqi said that the government is trying to attract and promote applications for investment. He noted that the government will stop at nothing, in this respect, to reduce the difficulties facing investors. He said that the government has taken practical measures to achieve this goal, noting that today it passed to the People's Assembly several draft bills abolishing or reducing some fees on investment applications. He stressed that the 1,000 pound fee on an investment application has been abolished along with the 50,000 pound fee on applications for establishing companies. [passage omitted]

Dr. Sidqi emphasized that his government is implementing all the recommendations outlined in the report by the committee tasked to prepare a reply to the government policy statement regarding the confrontation of terrorism. He said that the government considers terrorism to be the most important challenge, noting that the government is augmenting and strengthening the security agencies. He said that bilateral agreements have been concluded to hand over terrorists and to put certain types of pressure on countries that give shelter to terrorists, and to enhance international cooperation in this area.

Dr. Sidqi called for cooperation between the government and all segments of the people to confront terrorism, stressing that it is not the issue of the government alone but of all factions of the people. [passage omitted]

Official on Antiterrorism Measures, Nile Cruises

NC2202154895 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1010 GMT 22 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Al-Minya, 22 Feb (MENA)—Major General Muhammad al-'Awadi Rizq, deputy director of security in al- Minya, has stated that the security men now operate according to a data base and possess the element of initiative and decisive confrontation, under Interior Minister Major General Hasan al-Alfi's instructions, to eliminate terrorists and purge al-Minya of them.

He denied all claims that policemen shoot indiscriminately. He stated that all the actions of security personnel are rational. Confrontations require quick decisions in any situation, especially since the terrorists begin shooting at security men during clashes which then requires the security men to respond immediately and eliminate them.

At a news conference this morning attended by representatives of local and world news agencies, television networks, and journalists, he said that despite the decisive confrontation with these terrorists, still some attacks are launched from sugar cane plantations, impeding the policemen's efforts to eliminate other terrorists.

He noted that most of the incidents taking place these days, the latest of which was the killing of an informer in Abu Qurqas, are confined to certain places in one or two towns. The security authorities will soon be able to eliminate them.

He said the main reason for the delay in arresting the remaining terrorists is that the sugar cane plantations, which cover 42,000 feddans of land, cannot be penetrated by the security agencies. He added that these areas will be exposed in a few months and then confrontation with terrorists will be open and face to face.

He said 12,000 feddans of these plantations have been removed and 30,000 feddans remain. He added that the open areas now put pressure on the terrorists, who have begun to move to other places, therefore facilitates our task of eradicating them gradually in Mallawi and Abu Qurqas.

Answering a question whether haphazard arrests are made as some people claim, al-Minya's deputy director of security said the security authorities act only within the law. Such arrests are made in the cases when too many suspects are involved, which is a legal measure.

He noted that most of the suspects are young, between the ages of 13-17, and are lured by the masterminds. However, he added, the door to repentance is open for anyone who returns to his senses, a policy adopted by the interior minister.

Answering a question whether there are signs of financial aid from abroad, he affirmed that as long as there are weapons and funds available, there is no doubt that there is foreign support and all indications confirm this beyond any doubt. [passage omitted]

Replying to another question on terrorists hiding in some mosques in al-Minya, he clarified that the Awqaf Ministry has taken over all mosques in the al-Minya Governorate. These mosques are now at the disposal and responsibility of the Awqaf Ministry.

Answering a question on whether confrontation with these terrorists will last long, he affirmed that the remaining group is limited to certain areas and will be eliminated soon, without giving any specific dates. He noted that there are specific security measures and a timetable in place to eradicate them and that there is a positive indication that they will be eliminated soon.

He commented on a Nile cruise by a tourist ship today penetrating various parts of al-Minya. He said this trip signals the start and continuation of journeys along the Nile during this tourism season.

Addressing correspondents and representatives of newspapers and television networks, he said: You noticed

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during the journey routine patrols and that the Nile banks are safe because most of the men who used to shoot at tour ships have been eliminated.

He added that four other ships are waiting in Luxor and will begin their tour when the first ship completes its journey, signaling the beginning of Nile River cruises.

The deputy director of al-Minya security affirmed that the Nile River route is fully safe for tourist activities and we have nothing to fear concerning these vessels. He said security measures will continue to secure these vessels for a safe tourist season.

Comprehensive Strategy Against 'Terrorism' Advocated

95LD0028B Cairo AL-AHRAM AL-DUWALI in Arabic 20 Jan 95 p 6

[Article by Dr. Ahmad Jalal 'Izz-al-Din: "Comprehensive Strategy for Confrontation"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The capability level of a terrorist organization progresses from one stage to another. It normally begins with a stage of weakness, passes through a testing stage, and at its peak reaches what the organization terms full capability. Although these terms have been used by organizations that engage in violence in the name of Islam, they are not the creations of these organizations. Rather, the terms are translations of the names of the stages through which a terrorist organization normally passes in any region of the world, whatever the organization's source of authority may be.

Any terrorist organization depends on a number of basic elements for its success and continued existence. If the organization loses one of them, it cannot remain on the scene. These factors are:

1. Continuing ability to recruit new organization members to renew cells and replace members arrested or killed during operations. But although an organization's size increases its capabilities, size comes at the cost of cohesion and difficulty of penetration.

2. A broad base of sympathizers attracted by raising glittering slogans and playing on captivating feelings such as religion, justice, reform, and freedom.

3. Assuring an adequate flow of funding, because terrorist operations have become enormously expensive compared to the past.

4. The existence of a persuasive and dominant leadership with organization and planning ability.

5. Maintenance of complete secrecy and a secure communications network aimed at enabling the organization to realize the factor of surprise and take the initiative.

Whoever has followed terrorist activity in Egypt in recent years has noticed that the main extremist organizations began thinking that they had reached the testing stage between 1991 and 1993. At that time they engaged in a series of escalating operations. This can be attributed to three main factors that contributed greatly to the development of the capacity of these organizations:

1. Financial support was flowing to the organizations from abroad and sometimes from at home, either directly or in the form of contributions to charitable activities diverted to other purposes.

2. With the end of the Afghan war, the resources that were supporting the war and recruiting youths to fight in Afghanistan turned to directing these youths within the countries to try to demolish their social systems.

3. In default of a security strategy based on information and planning, security activity was improvised in nature. It was limited to reactions that sometimes were excessive and sometimes were desultory.

The current security policy, which began by formulating a strategy and well-thought-out plans, has undoubtedly achieved notable success in heading off most terrorist activities, reducing the number of operations, eliminating the most important leaders, and controlling most sources of funding. The policy has relied on information, which, as we have often repeated, is the most successful method of combatting terrorism. Whoever possesses information possesses strength.

While security efforts have been largely successful in controlling terrorist activity in the cities, small operations continue to occur from time to time. These involve the assassination of security personnel or persons cooperating with the police in some of the governorates of Upper Egypt. The situation raises a number of questions: Should security agencies focus their efforts more on the cities, or were the terrorist leaders liquidated in the cities different from the terrorist leaders in Upper Egypt? What goal do the terrorist elements have in engaging in these small operations, which, by any measure, achieve no political goals? More importantly, does the persistence of small manifestations of terrorism mean that the microbe has not been eliminated and could become active again? A more general question is whether the treatment now being used to combat terrorism treats the root of the problem, or is it a matter of ad hoc operations that only postpone dealing with the problem?

We must work out an answer to these questions by reference to the five basic elements mentioned above as being necessary for the continuance of terrorist activity.

1. Extremist thinking can still to some extent attract new elements because it still has not been decisively confronted. The ongoing efforts in this area lack coordination. Furthermore, some factors favoring rejectionism, such as economic conditions, frustration, and corruption, still exist.

2. On the other hand, extremist activity in Egypt finds no broad base of sympathizers, because the Egyptian character leans toward moderation and because extremist activity has engaged in violence against citizens themselves.

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3. Funding undoubtedly continues to flow, but to a lesser degree. The security agencies have succeeded in controlling domestic sources of funding and have greatly restricted the ease with which funds arrive from abroad.

4. Clearly, the security system has been able to strike at the important organizational leaders who were planning and directing terrorist activity. However, because extremist organizations rely on a structure of semiautonomous cells, the activity of these cells can spread spontaneously for a shorter period of time and over a smaller distance.

5. Evidence indicates that security has been able to penetrate the organizations and strike a blow against the rule of secrecy, thereby depriving the organizations of ability to take the initiative.

One can therefore say that the reduction in terrorist activity in the cities has deprived terrorism of one of its most important characteristics by virtue of which it was termed "urban terrorism" and which differentiated it from other forms of political violence. The concentration of terrorism in certain areas of Upper Egypt is basically caused by environmental factors that require a different kind of confrontation and a longer period of treatment. One can also conclude that the active groups have different organizational affiliations. This precludes security's concentrating its efforts only in the cities. On the other hand, some criticize security for taking unusually cruel measures in Upper Egypt.

If terrorist activity in Egypt has again retreated to the stage of weakness, the small operations taking place in Upper Egypt are merely operations to establish a presence, sometimes mixed with a motive of revenge. The operations follow no definite strategy. They are more like provocations that do not rise to the level of a clash. They are only attempts to prove that the phenomenon has a continued presence on the scene, a presence that has been used in some of the foreign media to allege that the social system in Egypt is undergoing a serious challenge.

As for the future of the phenomenon, the security solution is by nature temporary, as everyone knows. The security system has neither the responsibility nor the ability to cure the problems that produce the phenomenon of terrorism. It confronts the phenomenon when it translates itself into concrete action. For this reason, a comprehensive strategy for overcoming the phenomenon is a necessity. Before it is formulated, there must be sound analysis of the phenomenon, its causes, its dimensions, and its possibilities, so that goals, programs, and necessary implementation mechanisms can be defined. Regional variables and their direct and indirect effects on the phenomenon in the area must also be taken into account.

It is not an intellectual luxury at this point for you to review a summary of a new idea that deserves consideration and to try to explain the psychological motive why some elements continue to engage in terrorist activity despite the defeat of their strategy and their knowledge that they will not achieve any end. The explanation essentially is that the focus of attention of a person who does not act from ideological motive or who claims to believe in an ideology while in fact not fully knowing its real content is the need for direct action to change existing conditions. Such a person does not focus on creating an ultimate, ideal model, either because a thorough definition of such a model is lacking, or because it is completely vague. The orientation of such a terrorist individual, who may have been fighting previously for a certain group which later broke up or faded away because of security strikes, will basically turn to fighting for the sake of fighting. This is because he has entered a disturbed state that forces him to turn to violent action to give meaning to a life devoid of any meaning. Professor William May thinks that this shift is linked to the factor of exhilaration or intoxication. He says: "Our perplexity in explaining why terrorists continue to use a method likely to cause their destruction only reflects our failure to realize that terrorism contains an important dimension outside the world of political dialogue—the dimension of exhilaration or intoxication resulting from challenging society and the law. This emotional element is linked to the drive toward annihilation." He distinguishes between this type of terrorist and the type that believes in a specific principle that can be realized by the calculated use of terror as a political weapon, as is the case in national liberation movements.

When a group acts essentially or mainly out of nonstrategic motives, such a nexus may raise possibilities for random terrorist activities aimed at violence for its own sake merely to cause disturbance and anarchy. Societies that suffer from such disturbance must look for ways to give meaning to the lives of such persons and to make them cling to life like other persons.

Article Explores 'Living With' Limited 'Terrorism'

95LD0028C Cairo AL-AHRAM AL-DUWALI in Arabic 20 Jan 95 p 6

[Article by Muhammad 'Abd—al-Salam: "Living With 'Limited Terrorism'"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Perhaps Egyptian thinking does not have to return to what it was before the recent wave of terrorist violence that exploded early in 1992 and continued regularly for nearly two years before receding in 1994. It may be important to discard without emotion the simple premises that long governed public thinking about Egypt's security and to deal with the problem of violence with less sensitivity and with colder heads, as has indeed begun to happen. Now that the state has the means to contain acts of terrorism continuously and effectively, one should stop thinking about the day when such acts shall stop completely. In short, perhaps we have to think of living with a certain level of violence and of not becoming very disturbed if occasional limited acts of terrorism continue at current rates. Most of the

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parties have realized the limits of their influence. Thus, dealing with terrorism with the logic with which one deals with accidents is an issue deserving thought.

To begin, defining a relatively disciplined framework for analyzing the question of terrorism may help clarify some of the reasons for dealing with it by this logic. Violence is a phenomenon, not a problem. Phenomena cannot be "solved," nor do they simply end; they can only be "contained." One deals with them with the goal of ending their dangerous manifestations until they recede. This is especially true when terrorism has taken the form of political-religious terrorist violence essentially based on two immediate factors:

1. the existence of domestic groups that believe in violence as almost the only means to achieve their goals; and

2. the existence of overseas and domestic support for these groups in the context of complex political and religious trends.

Parallel to these two factors, all the reports and studies that have come from different agencies in Egypt indicate that there are political, social, economic, and cultural factors at another level that cause terrorism, although only a few reports indicate that nearly all these factors are indirect ones that can lead to the appearance, increase, or continuance of political violence, just as they can lead to an increase in crime or other things, depending on the nature and direction of intermediate variables. What is important as regards living with limited violence are two points:

First, completely eliminating acts of terrorism involves ending the direct factors linked to these acts—ending the physical existence of violent groups and stopping the process of domestic and foreign support for them. Various countries in the Arab region and Western Europe have succeeded in doing so over a certain time span. Indeed, the matter may only require—to use a military expression—inflicting sufficient losses on them to take them out of the theater of operations or deprive them of the ability to achieve any important goal. However, the basic proposition in this regard is still that following policies to eliminate terrorist acts completely, although theoretically possible, is surrounded by various complications.

Second, the final elimination of terrorist acts involves dealing with the indirect factors that cause them to continue or to revive at certain times. The problem is that the policies related to these factors are linked to considerations much broader than the issue of terrorism. These policies require enormous resources and cause upheavals in government plans. Indeed, some of the problems indirectly connected with terrorism—unemployment, for example—sometimes appear unamenable to final solution even for industrially developed countries. What is possible is to limit the effect of these factors generally and create a general framework that prevents their effect from tending specifically toward acts of political violence.

Of course this certainly does not mean that terrorist acts will never stop. I only mean that one should not become upset because they have not stopped completely, so long as they are no longer increasing systematically as happened previously.

Seen in this way, the issue of living with a certain level of violence raises a number of subsidiary issues. The most important of them are the following.

1. The amount of danger. Acts of terrorist violence in Egypt began simply in the mid-seventies with the existence of a single violent organization, so that it was merely a matter of eliminating that organization. Widescale violence erupted in 1981. It became clear that the organizations had spread, though capabilities remained low. Terrorism retained the logic of "operations" during the eighties, such as the actions of "Those Delivered From the Fire." The first really extensive wave of violence in Egypt erupted in 1992, making it clear that one of the two main violent organizations had expanded unimaginably and that the other organization had become so fierce that its members no longer shrank from carrying out any action regardless of the religious cover called a fatwa [Islamic legal ruling]. More importantly, it also became clear that there were a large number of indirect factors of instability contributing to violence. Thus it seemed that some premises had begun to be shaken.

At the same time, the violent wave of 1992/93 made clear the extent to which the danger was linked to overseas. As a result, terrorism, which during two previous decades had been a domestic issue, became an issue of foreign policy. There were countries that supported terrorism in Egypt. There were forces inside Arab or non-Arab countries funding and facilitating such acts. There were gathering points in various countries for terrorist extremist elements. There were parties ready to give these elements political asylum, facilitate their entry, or even deal with them under the influence of simplistic ideas or old complexes. There were also various parties that believed they could benefit from what was happening in Egypt. The wave made it clear that the amount of danger surrounding Egypt's national security at this level was not small. Egyptian policies toward issues and parties therefore became noticeably more complex. This was true of security policies, issues of economic reform, and even dealings with other countries. One can imagine that this trend will continue or that it must continue.

2. The cost of security. This wave of terrorism showed that the time of "cheap security" had ended, perhaps forever. Egypt had enjoyed an exceptional level of domestic security compared to countries of similar size and location. Because of this situation, security had had no appreciable material cost. The recent terrorist acts have made it clear that budgets must increase, training must be improved, armaments must become more advanced, and equipment must be modernized.

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The cost of security in Egypt therefore rose. One can imagine that this trend will continue. The security force has become an important question in Egypt.

3. Limits of influence. The acts of violence preceding the wave of 1992 led to the raising of various political issues. This happened in 1981, in the mid-eighties, and in 1990. However, given the nature of these operations and their distance from each other in time—including the assassination of President al-Sadat—they did not lead to raising major extended issues. However, the wave of 1992/93 was more organized, intensive, and complex than previous events. It took place before the cameras of the international television networks and targeted sectors that led to immediate foreign reactions in an international and regional climate dominated by special sensitivities, exaggerations, and scenarios concerning violence. This led to the raising of fundamental issues about Egypt's future and role. The Egyptian mind, which was not used to this sort of violence, was not spared the effects of this climate. This could be seen in the great distress whenever a terrorist incident occurred, the exaggeration of the extent of the implications of the events, apprehension about understandable cases of quiet, and expectation of worse, until it became possible to contain the violence in 1993.

Certainly the most important lesson of this wave was the limits of its impact. It made it clear that Egypt was a great country, a "heavy-weight," and that it would be difficult for any domestic security challenge to lead to a real shaking of its stability or raise "fundamental questions" about its future in accordance with the major Western scenarios. The actions and reactions of 1992/93 showed that the Egyptian state had security, political, and social "protective barriers" that could stop the repercussions of violence and the effects of destabilizing factors when they reached dangerous levels.

Therefore, living with a certain level of violence and terrorism, as happened during certain periods in Italy, Britain, Germany, France, Japan, and other countries, is a question that should be pondered, especially because there is a broad understanding that has expressed itself in the form of policies to curb the dangers to Egypt's security, a broad development of security tools and policies, and acceptance of the costs of this. Furthermore, the limits of the effect of acts of violence on overall conditions in Egypt have become clear.

Article Views Egyptian Influence in Asia

95LD0028A Cairo AL-AHRAM AL-DUWALI in Arabic 19 Jan 95 p 7

[Article by Dr. Muhammad Harb, head of Egyptian Center for Ottoman Studies and for Turkic and Balkan Research: "The Chechnyans and the Egyptian Presence in the Caucasus"]

[FBIS Translated Text] One can feel the success of Egyptian foreign policy in laying a firm foundation for Egyptian interests in Central Asia and the Caucasus. First the establishment of the Islamic Center in the Azerbaijani capital of Baku and the Egyptian Islamic Center in the Kazakh capital of Alma-Ata was announced. Then al-Azhar University and the Egyptian universities were opened to the flow of young people from Central Asia and the Caucasus. Egypt's Foreign Ministry thus laid a foundation for Egyptian-Turkic-Central Asiatic-Caucasian dealings. This Egyptian policy has taken into account the tremendous economic resources possessed by the Turkic world with its population of 250 million, traditional Islamic culture, tremendous petroleum wealth, huge gold reserve, and peoples that love Egypt.

Chechnya is a Caucasian republic whose borders Russia seized 200 years ago in czarist times. In 1991, the Chechen people, their seven tribes united heart and soul, chose as their president the air force officer Dzhokhar Dudayev, who proclaimed Chechnya's independence from Russia. Here one must pause over the name of President Dzhokhar Dudayev, since understanding him is the natural key to the gate of Egypt's national interest in the entire Caucasus. He is a traditional Muslim very friendly to the Arabs. He was delighted by Egypt's foreign policy step when President Husni Mubarak laid the cornerstone for Egyptian relations with the countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus when they recently became independent after the breakup of the Soviet Union. President Dudayev, an ardent Muslim, is searching for a model and wants one that is moderate. He is a Caucasian unionist officer who advocates the unity of the North Caucasus—Dagestan, Ossetia, Ingushetia, Chechnya, and Kabardino-Balkaria—an important strategic location with vast natural resources. The Russian economic blockade of Chechnya lasted for three uninterrupted years, from 1991 until Russian armored vehicles and the Russian Air Force made their military moves against the Chechens. How did the Chechens hold out? It was the Chechens' abundant petroleum, natural gas, and natural resources and their neighboring brothers in the oil-rich Caucasus, which if it were independent, would be as wealthy as Kuwait. Indeed, the oil reserve in Tatarstan is greater than in Kuwait, and Azerbaijan's oil is cleaner than that of the Gulf.

The union of the North Caucasus is instinctive for these peoples. As soon as the advance of Russian forces toward the Chechen border was announced, the Ingush Republic quickly declared war on Russia. As Konstantin Matveyev [name as transliterated] has said, "It seems that the Ingush Republic, which is the outlet for Chechnya's revolutionaries, will be in the probable guerrilla war against Russian forces. It seems clear that General Aushev, the president of the Ingush Republic, is resolved to help the Chechen Republic. The Republic of Dagestan has done likewise. Both of them are part of the Russian Federation." The Chechens alone had announced their independence.

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Those who study history know that this has been Russian policy toward national government in the republics that the occupation of Tatarstan, Dagestan, and the Crimea seized.

The moral need of the North Caucasus which we set before Egyptian foreign policy makers—this need is Islam.

I therefore think that the Egyptian Foreign Ministry must study the potential situation. The first question to ask is which Islam.

We have already referred briefly to the enthusiasm of the North Caucasian peoples for unity. President Dzhokhar Dudayev has said that it is nobler for a man to live fighting than to live in slavery (Radio London, morning of 23 December 1993). He has worn a shroud since 25 December 1994. President Dudayev is looking for an Islamic formula for the future North Caucasus Republic. His deputy has said, "We shall succeed, even if it takes 50 years."

We would propose to decisionmakers that President Dzhokhar Dudayev's Islam is very similar to that of a sincere Muslim in Egypt zealous for Islam and wanting to understand it. He is searching for Islam, but with conditions of his own—namely, an Islam unlike the Islam of Iran. President Dudayev is a Sunni and follows the Hanafi rite.

It will be a peaceful Islam because President Dudayev is a Sufi who follows the Naqshbandi order. Although he is for military force by virtue of his strong mountaineer's nature, his pan-Caucasian thought, and his birth in the forced exile ordered by Stalin, Dudayev is mild mannered when it comes to Islam. He is not inclined toward religious violence of any form. He is traditional, having deemed it part of Islam to issue a decree forbidding male doctors to practice gynecology. Although the Chechen Constitution of 1991 provides for a secular Chechen state, he ordered the reopening of 1,550 mosques that the communists had closed. Having decided that the state should sponsor Islamic activity and Islamic studies, he established a state Institute for Islamic Studies in Grozny. He is of the Hanafi rite, but he has also supported funding the establishment of the Imam al-Shafi'i Institute for Islamic Studies with Egyptian teachers. Dudayev is undoubtedly the symbol of the peoples of the North Caucasus, whether he succeeds or fails. If Dudayev is killed, he will become a spark that sets the house of the Russian Federation aflame. If Dudayev takes to the mountains, we shall have to begin the countdown toward the breakup of the Russian Federation. Not long ago Gorbachev ordered Russian armor to storm Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan; the Russian forces defeated the Azeri people, but the countdown to the breakup of the Soviet Union began at that time.

Egyptian foreign policy should view the peoples of the Caucasus culturally, religiously, and politically with the view of an older brother. The Islamic Caucasus means Azerbaijan, Dagestan, North Ossetia, Ingushetia, Bashkortostan, and Balkaria, as well as the Crimea in Ukraine, Adygea and Karachay-Cherkessia, in addition to the Chechens and the Ingush. Strategically it is a bridge from Asia to Europe. The Russian historian (Fadeyev) made the following pronouncement about the Muslim Caucasians: "If it had not been for the Caucasian wars that impeded Russia's advance, Russian armies would have been able to occupy the entire East from Egypt to Japan, marching to the melodies of their bands."

The president of Azerbaijan, Haydar Aliyev, has said: "Egypt is the gateway to the Arab world. When we wanted to have relations with the Arab world, our ambassador in Cairo necessarily was our first. Egypt is our gateway to the Islamic world. President Husni Mubarak is the model of a friend eager to extend bridges of cooperation to us. We are striving, and we are with him." So said the Caucasian-Azerbaijani president, known for his political acumen.

Egypt's interests in the Chechen issue are deep interests now and for the future. The peoples of the North Caucasus will confirm the role of Egyptian interests with the Turkic and ethnically allied peoples—namely, the Muslims throughout the Russian Federation and China. For example, our policy in the North Caucasus will confirm Egypt's role among the Russian Federation's Muslims in the republics of the Volga basin in Tatarstan, Chuvashia, Mordvinia, Udmurtia, and Mari Shakalov, as well as among the Muslims of Siberia—4 million Muslims. It will also confirm Egypt's role among the Muslims of China, especially the Turkic portion—East Turkestan, whose leader, Yusuf Alptegin, told me, "The people of East Turkestan cannot forget the role of Egypt, which gave us shelter and hospitality when we needed it."

The Caucasus is the key to the Muslims of newly independent Asia, of Asia on its way to independence, and of Asia that may remain under the rule of foreign countries. After our foreign policy of supporting peace in the Caucasus succeeds, Egypt must complete its laudable steps without fear. We need not fear another Afghanistan, because the Chechen people are free of any Iranian presence, one of the reasons for the current conflict in Afghanistan. The Chechens lack Afghanistan's intense tribal rivalry. Neither should we fear another Bosnia, because the population of Chechnya according to the latest statistics is 1,450,000, of whom 1,000,000 are Chechens. They possess all their country's resources from the armed forces to municipal governments and all the administrative positions. They have the military commander—and the military here is important. They also have the support of 5,000 Muslim Tatars, 4,000 Muslim Turks from the Turks of al-Akhsaqa, and 20,000 Muslim Dagestani citizens of Chechnya who obey Dudayev's orders. The others, who include Armenians, Jews, and Russians, have no power or strength. Bosnia has no outlet; Chechnya has outlets all of which are friendly to it: the republics of Ingushetia and Daghestan

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both announced that they were joining forces with the Chechens against Russia from the first day of Russian military movements.

Finally, two tremendous currents are taking shape in the Caucasus region and in the areas of the Muslims of Russia. These two are the future: Slavic nationalist and Islamic nationalism. We should plan our policy on this basis from now on. We must ask what Islamic cooperation can be given to the Caucasus.

Article Examines Reports on Economy

95LD0025A Cairo AL-MUSAWWAR in Arabic 6 Jan 95 pp 25-26

[Article by Majid 'Attiyah: "Four Reports Evaluating Egyptian Economy's Performance"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Egyptian economy has occupied the attention of several international organizations and agencies. Apart from reports of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund concerning important developments in the process of economic change, there is a report of the American Embassy in Cairo that contains another view of Egyptian efforts toward enhancing economic growth, liberalization, and privatization. A report of the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) assesses significant developments by a statistical comparison of the industrial progress that has accounted for 40 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) for the first time in the last few years. There was also a report in December 1994 from the European Commission concerning the Egyptian economy. It enumerated the developments toward increased economic change through a reliance on the private sector. As for the World Bank's report, which was issued in October 1994, it is 120 full pages, of which 80 pages are numbers and statistics. It commends the accomplishments made, which the report deems "important and significant," and concentrates on the growth of the Egyptian private sector.

Many figures have been used to create these reports. The report of the European Commission that was issued in December 1994 is comprehensive and full of statistics concerning the Egyptian economy on its new course toward liberalization and reliance on the Egyptian private sector. In addition, it mentions the welcoming of foreign investments within Egypt, either in a private foreign activity or in partnership with private sector Egyptians. With respect to annual investments, the balance of the private sector should reach 50 percent of the volume of investments in the state, since the government's role has been limited to investment in public utilities or the so-called "basic structure." The private sector's share was no more than 14 percent at the beginning of the eighties.

The report also referred to new legislation that allows non-Egyptians to own companies outright, since the old law required Egyptian participation, either from the private or public sector.

The report pointed to the liberalization of exchange and interest rates, and the government's policies with regard to dealing with budget deficits, reducing the trade deficit, and changing from a budget deficit to a budget surplus, even though its size differs from year to year.

The report gives a complete review of the policy of "privatization," which offers a number of shares in public companies for public subscription, apart from the workers' ownership share which sometimes exceeds 10 percent of the public company's capital. Through this, the government aims at broadening the private ownership base. The report offers an example of companies, in which the workers own a percentage of the capital, and examples of companies that raised their capital and then offered the increase for subscription. This subscription received widespread acceptance.

UNIDO

UNIDO's report reviewed the history of Egyptian industry in various stages of change. The last stage is the change toward development of the private sector that began in the middle seventies, and then the privatization which began at the beginning of the nineties, with the start of the economic reform program agreed upon with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

The report records the results of these latest changes in changing the trade account balance from a deficit of $1.6 billion in 1990 to a surplus of more than $3.6 billion in 1992 and a little less the following year. That was attributed to a debt reduction from $51.9 billion in 1988 to $40.6 billion by the end of 1991. A further reduction was made after the Paris Club Conference and its decision to nullify 50 percent of the government's debts.

The report referred to other positive results attributable to reform, including the increase in the rate of growth of added value in industry to 9.5 percent for 1991.

Increased Investments

The economic reforms have led to expedited industrial expansion, with impressive growth rates annually averaging 14.6 percent through the period 1976-81. This five-year plan reflected a sharp rise in investment, in response to available opportunities because of the new policy. Most of these investments were concentrated in hydrocarbon industries. In the following period of 1982-89, industrial growth slowed down and approximated the GDP growth. However, at the end of the eighties and beginning of the nineties, the new reforms resulted in expediting industrial growth. This development reached a record level in 1990.

With regard to productivity in industry, it recorded an actual growth rate of 3 to 4 percent annually, during the years 1980 to 1990.

Law No. 230 for the year 1929 [year as published, 1989] allows non-Egyptians full ownership of industrial companies, which has led to promoting strong growth in the

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private sector of investment in industry. By the end of November 1993, nearly 15.3 billion Egyptian pounds had been invested in industry and mining. That does not count investments made in the free zone. Despite the fact that most of the industrial activities take place in Egypt's main cities, these are several important cities that have been designated for heavy industries, such as aluminum in Naj' Hamadi and chemical industries in Aswan. The government has established a number of new cities on nonagricultural land, in order to attract new industries and to resolve the density problem in Cairo, Alexandria, and certain other areas.

American View

The report of the American Embassy in Cairo enumerated the successes that the Egyptian government has achieved in implementing the program of economic reforms. It also referred to certain obstacles that were encountered during the process of the programs, especially in the area of liberalizing trade and with the programs of privatization.

This report stated that Egypt has made considerable progress in liberalizing its trade system, even though certain local industries are living under the umbrella of governmental and nongovernmental protection. However, the government has recently lowered the maximum for customs tariffs. Progress in the privatization process is essential for programs of successful structural change. However, the results achieved so far are not encouraging. Law No. 203 forms the legal governmental basis for the restructuring of 314 private sector companies. As part of an agreement with the World Bank, the government has drawn up a schedule for the privatization of companies that are considered most attractive for both local and foreign investors. The government says that it has sold assets valued at approximately 4.5 billion pounds ($1.3 billion). The government has signed contracts to sell a bottling company and to privatize the first company, which were signed in April 1994, and to sell 11 companies for public operation to associations of employees (share-holding workers). However delay in actions, disputes over the value of assets, and a lack of readiness to enter bids have helped to slow the privatization process. In the beginning of 1991, Egypt replaced its system of licensing investments with a system permitting automatic approval for investments in sectors that were not on the negative list in July 1993. The requirements for the local percentage for assembly factories were nullified, despite the fact that they still had to attain the local percentage of up to 40 percent in order to obtain a reduction in customs.

Ideal Growth Rate

The World Bank's report stated that the GDP for fiscal year 1993/94 will achieve a growth rate of 2.2 percent, i.e., higher than the percentage anticipated by some experts, which was 1.5 percent. That is the percentage that was reached last year. The report stressed that this increase in growth comes despite the current stagnation. Therefore, the significant recovery in economic growth that is expected to occur depends on the government's plan for structural reforms and the continuation of improvement in the economy as a whole.

The report referred to the role of the private sector in growth, since it sees it as increasing over previous years, because of stability in exchange and interest rates.

The report examined the growth of basic sectors in the economy. It enumerated current developments in the agricultural sector, after the change in land laws, and the current change in the industrial sector following "privatization" of public and state-owned factories. The report also referred to the improvement of investment methods and the development of trade, after the liberalization policies and the increase in competitiveness of certain industries, such as ready-made clothing.

With regard to industry, its present growth rate is 2.7 percent, following the increased role of the private sector and its increased share of public investments, which registered 59 percent last year.

These results in economic growth have occurred despite what the services sector has been experiencing—especially in tourism—from the terrorist attacks. Moreover, it was affected last year by the earthquake.

The report concludes with a review of the policies liberalizing commodity pricing restrictions and freeing trade of certain measures that were hindrances. This has helped to achieve a significant surplus in the balance of payments.

Libya

Tripoli Signs Accord With Malta on Joint Trade Council

LD2302154295 Tripoli Great Jamahiriyah Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 23 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] An agreement has been signed in Valletta on the setting up of a Libyan-Maltese council between the chambers of commerce in the two countries that will have the function of supplying certificates of origin related to exports and legally validating all documents related to trade exchange between the two countries.

The agreement was signed by the sister secretary of the Libyan Arab People's Bureau in Malta and for the Maltese side by the chairman of the Maltese Chamber of Commerce.

This council will compile information and statistics and determine additional fields of cooperation to develop trade between the two countries and bolster and develop protection of trade, industrial, and financial exchanges and exchanges of services, including the development of joint projects.

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Sudan

London Paper Interviews Ummah Party Leader

MM2302143195 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 19 Feb 95 p2

[Interview with Dr. 'Umar Nur al-Da'im, secretary general of the Sudanese Ummah Party, by Muhammad al-Hasan Ahmad; place and date not given: "The Secretary General of the Ummah Party Belittles the Chances of Reconciliation. "Washington Follows With Interest the Effect of the Southern Sudan War on the Horn of Africa."]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Ahmad] Sudanese President 'Umar al- Bashir has announced the mobilization of 1 million fighters from the Popular Defense Forces in all the provinces for defending the homeland and intimidating the enemies. Do not you think that the regime's bolstering of popular militias will strengthen the regime's hold and weaken your chances in the opposition to bring change about?

[Al-Da'im] Ideological regimes, particularly those dominated by one party, never learn. We have seen how the Ethiopian [former President] General Mengistu Haile Mariam mobilized over 3,000,000 men from the revolutionary militias to subdue Eritrea, whose population did not exceed 3,000,000, and sought then to frighten his neighbors as well as the Ethiopian people, who had rejected Marxism. We all saw the catastrophe that befell these militias and the Ethiopian army and how Mengisto fled and how the Eritrean and Ethiopian peoples triumphed.

Lieutenant General Al-Bashir is moving in the same direction. I believe he will meet with the same fate. The regime does not seem aware how many billions of funds it will need to prepare 1 million combatants in a country with a deteriorating economy. Even the United States, whom he called upon to supply him with "Mujahidin," does not possess the financial capability to settle the monthly cost of such a "Mujahidin" force.

Strangely enough, the regime is still determined to pursue the military solution, inflame the religious war, and threaten the security of Sudan's neighboring countries.

[Ahmad] The regime has carried out a cabinet reshuffle under which 'Ali 'Uthman Muhammad Taha was appointed foreign minister. What effect will this reshuffle have?

[Al-Da'im] Brother Husayn Abu Salih, who was relieved of his post as foreign minister, was not a political decisionmaker. His presence at the foreign ministry was only a formality. The palace group led by Ghazi Salah al-Din al-'Atabani and the [National Democratic] Front's cadres at the foreign ministry after their liquidation [as published] were the ones that made the important decisions at the foreign ministry. The new minister, 'Ali 'Uthman Muhammad Taha, is a local politician and has no connections with the world outside the sphere of Sudan. But he is known to be the person who staged the Front's coup and set up the single-party dictatorship. He is also known for his ability to make strategic and difficult decisions within his organization.

The problem facing 'Ali 'Uthman and his group headed by Ghazi al- 'Atabani is that Sudan's external image has become stained by its conviction of committing abominable violations of human rights. Furthermore, Sudan has become regionally more isolated as a result of his frivolous policies.

Sudan has become a springboard for international terrorist groups. The case of Carlos is not out of people's minds yet. Furthermore, the regime's credibility has plummeted to below zero.

In view of all that, I do not expect 'Ali 'Uthman to accomplish anything in his new post, particularly as the Ministry of Social Planning, which he has left, failed to bring about the required cultural development and brought disrepute upon Islam, the religion of justice and mercy.

[Ahmad] There is a great deal of talk about reconciliation in Sudan, particularly following the announcement in Khartoum that Transitional National Council Chairman Muhammad al-Amin Khalifah has had two meetings with Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi and the Mirghani 'Abd-al- Rahman group, which is holding negotiations in the name of the Democratic Unionist Party. What is the background to these meetings?

[Al-Da'im] The meetings have continued internally, though not officially, due to the nature of the society and the customs in Sudan. However, what is important is that the gap between the regime and the opposition has grown wider. This is because the "Salvation" Government has been working to strengthen the pillars of the one-party system and the comprehensive System [Arabic: Al-Nizam Al-Shumuli], which is based on popular committees in the Libyan style, while the parties are working for the return of democracy, pluralism, and the rule of law.

The regime has decided to hold general elections at the beginning of next month within the framework of its comprehensive outlook, in an attempt to win the support and participation of the parties, if possible, because that would give it some degree of legitimacy, even if it was a limited one.

But our position is clear. Brother Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi has written an article in AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in which he declared a total divorce between the outlook of the Front and that of the Ummah Party in all the matters raised in the arena, be they Islamic or political.

The brothers in the Democratic Unionist Party, who entered into a dialogue with the regime, are aware of the party's demands which center on the restoration of democracy and pluralism and the finding of a peaceful solution to the war. Thus there is no reason for participation in rigged elections.

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But should the regime decide to heed and submit to the demands of the Sudanese people, then the elections must be held under international supervision so that matters return to those they concern so that they can decide them in accordance with their own free will.

[Ahmad] Does not the exchange of accusations within the opposition circles, the latest being the statements made by al- Sharif Zayn al-'Abidin al-Hindi, reflect a crisis within the ranks of the opposition?

[Al-Da'im] There is no crisis within the ranks of the opposition. Besides, differences of opinion among the principal forces are always transitional. As to brother Zayn al-'Abidin, I was expecting that after his long absence from direct participation in opposition work that he would play a more positive role, first, in bolstering the Unionist Party and, second, in bolstering the opposition in order to complete the operation of ridding the country from the Front's regime. But instead of doing so, he has returned to attacking the others.

I was surprised by his attack on brother al-Sadiq al-Mahdi. I do not need to defend al-Sadiq al-Mahdi, for his position toward the Front and the question of reconciliation was clearly explained in his recent article and I believe that this provides sufficient reply to those who cast doubt on his stand.

We in the Ummah Party operate in broad daylight. All our documents which pertain to our way of dealing with the issues of Sudan are open for all to see and have been approved by the political bureau internally. We are prepared to enter into a dialogue with brother al-Sharif to clarify to him all that he finds ambiguous in our outlooks. We do not hesitate to criticize what brother al-Sharif says about the signing of the Asmara agreement by Muhammad 'Uthman al-Mirghani, [John] Garang, us, and the coalition members, particularly as this agreement was nothing more than a development of the opposition program and the opening up of new centers that had been in alliance with the regime.

I have read al-Sharif's book, which is entitled "The Last Word." I was astounded by brother al-Sharif's statement that he feels that the solution to the problem of southern Sudan should not go beyond local rule. In view of this, I did not find any in understanding his rejection of the Asmara agreement, because it granted federal and confederal rule to southern Sudan. Yet I still hope that al- Sharif will continue to work incessantly for bolstering the opposition work, which has now moved from the past phase of defending our positions to the phase of offensive.

[Ahmad] The Shaqdum agreement which was signed between you and the Garang movement has been exposed to criticism by some quarters. Do you think that the agreement has bypassed other forces?

[Al-Da'im] Since the polarization that took place at the Washington conference in October 1993, the Ummah Party continued to hold extensive contacts with the Popular Movement, lasting over a year. Last July, an expanded meeting was held and was attended the Popular Movement deputy commander Silva Kir and with Aliga Majok, Mom and Peter Newt [all names as transliterated]. From the Ummah Party's side, the meeting was attended by 'Umar Nur al-Da'im, Mubarak al-Mahdi, Salih Farah 'Abd-al-Rahman, and Faruq al-Barir. Brothers Boena Malwal and Aldo Ajo made considerable contribution to eliminating the points of differences at the meeting.

Last November, the Political Bureau of the Ummah Party inside [the country] approved the agreement in all its details. We received a message from Dr. John [Garang] informing us that the Movement's Bureau had also approved the agreement. Thereupon it was suggested that a conference be held in London in mid-September 1994 to announce the agreement. However, brother Mubarak al-Mahdi and myself decided to go to southern Sudan to sign the agreement in our own country and evaluate conditions through seeing things on the spot and through actual coexistence.

Our delegation, which consisted of myself, brother Mubarak and the party's representative in Nairobi, brother Bashir, arrived in southern Sudan on 8 December 1994 and so did brothers Boena Milwal, Aldo Ajo, Peter Newt, and others. We stayed there for four days and we received a great welcome, which helped to strengthen the confidence that was lacking between the Northerners and Southerners and removed the psychological barrier that was created by the years of bitter struggle and the war victims which had fallen from both sides and the devastation that had befallen the South and the North alike.

The bilateral agreement concluded between the Ummah Party and the Movement at Shaqdum defined clear programs. Undoubtedly too, it created a dynamism that won overwhelming support from all the neighboring countries and the African countries and raised hopes that the war was nearing its end, particularly as the agreement did not go beyond the declaration of the six principles that were defined by the IGADD member countries with some details pertaining to other questions.

[Ahmad] The people were surprised, following the Shaqdum agreement, to hear of another agreement concluded at Asmara on 27 December 1994—that is, only two weeks after the Shaqdum agreement. What is the story?

[Al-Da'im] Upon our return from the South we received a kind invitation from Eritrean President Isias, who had felt happy about the Shaqdum agreement and wished to hold consultations with the Sudanese opposition on behalf of the IGADD countries prior to the meetings of the presidents scheduled for 4 January 1995. Invitations were also sent to Muhammad 'Uthman al-Mirghani (Leader of the Unionist Party) and Dr. John Garang, leader of the Popular Movement. Sudanese Alliance Forces Commander Colonel [as published] 'Abd-al-'Aziz Khalid was at the time in Asmara. We all had talks with

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President Afwerki about the line we feel will realize our demands within the framework of the IGADD initiative. We felt that we should use this meeting to enter into an extensive dialogue and negotiations, which led to the Asmara agreement signed by 'Uthman al-Mirghani, Dr. John Garang, Brigadier General 'Abd-al- 'Aziz Khalid, and myself. It was undoubtedly a historic agreement which laid down clear features for a clear program for the opposition. We hope that the expanded meeting of the forces of the Democratic Alliance would complete the remaining important issues.

It is worth mentioning that the Asmara agreement has won acceptance by the majority of the peoples of the North and the South like and the support of IGADD countries, which are suffering from the continuation of the war in southern Sudan and its devastating impact on the stability of the region, seek security, and want to continue with their building and construction programs under normal conditions.

[Ahmad] A few days ago you returned together with Boena Milwal from a visit to the United States, where you had several contacts. What is new about the American attitude?

[Al-Da'im] The previous visit I and brother Boena paid to the United States took place last October. In the recent visit, which took place this month, we had with us a delegation from the World Christian Solidarity Organization [as published]. This organization works in the field of human rights. The delegation of this organization, which consisted of Baroness Cox, Makram Max [as transliterated], the Bishop of the Sudanese town of Al-Bayda, and John Ebner [as transliterated], the organization's secretary.

The delegation visited southern Sudan in the period between 24 and 30 January last and submitted a report on the deteriorating conditions and the starvation that threatens large numbers of citizens, particularly as the "Life Line" program had stopped completely.

The delegation met with the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs George Moss [as transliterated] and East Africa Department Head David Sheen [as transliterated], and with the Director of East African Affairs at the National Security Council, McArthur de Chider [as transliterated]. The group also met with six House of Representatives members at the office of the Representative Frank Wolf, who sympathizes with the Sudanese question. The delegation also acquainted the Foreign Relations and Human Rights Committee of the Senate and House of Representatives with the conditions in Sudan.

We definitely found during this visit that the American circles were more interested and follow and understand the dimensions of the Sudanese question and the effect of the war on the security and stability of the Horn of Africa.

Opposition Groups Reach 'Common Understanding'

MM2302091495 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 20 Feb 95 pp 1, 4

[Unattributed report: "Sudanese Officials meet with Unionist Party Representatives"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] London, Khartoum, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, agencies—The Sudanese Ummah Party, led by al-Sadiq al-Mahdi, and the Legitimate Command of the Sudanese Armed Forces, headed by General Fathi Ahmad 'Ali, have announced that they have reached a common understanding regarding confrontation with the Sudanese regime. Reports published in Khartoum said that meetings were held between Sudanese officials and representatives of the Democratic Unionist Party.

A statement, a copy of which was obtained by AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in London, said that the Ummah Party and the Legitimate Command of the Sudanese Armed Forces reached that understanding in support the opposition's national action and to ensure the success of the next opposition conference which would herald a decisive stage in the confrontation with the government. The two sides, the statement said, reaffirm their faith in the need to unite the Sudanese opposition forces with the aim of escalating the struggle against the Khartoum government and in the need for a consensus on an appropriate system of government that would achieve peace, democracy, unity, and development and consolidate stability. That is why, it said, their dialogue was constructive and covered essential issues and principles which should be on the list of priorities for national action and which deserve wider participation and agreement in the context of a strategy in which the civilian aspect would complement the military aspect of opposition action.

The statement was signed for the party by its official in charge of external activities Mubarak al-Mahdi, and for the command by its leader Gen. Fathi Ahmad 'Ali. [passage omitted]

Tunisia

President Holds Talks With Algeria's Dembri

LD2302143095 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 23 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali this morning at the Carthage Palace received Mohamed Salah Dembri, the foreign minister of fraternal Algeria and the special envoy of the Algerian State President Liamine Zeroual to his excellency the president.

Mohamed Salah Dembri made a statement saying that he was very happy to be in Tunisia and that he had the pleasure of meeting with President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and conveying to him the greetings of his brother State President Liamine Zeroual and his good wishes to the Tunisian people for more prosperity and success.

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He added that the meeting was an occasion to talk about bilateral relations and issues of common interest at the Arab Magheb Union, Arab, and international levels. He said in this connection: We have taken this opportunity to benefit from close quarters from the views of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali on the major issues which concern the Arab world, and above all our Maghreban region as well as African and international issues.

The meeting took place in the presence of Foreign Minister Habib Ben Yahia and the Algerian ambassador to Tunisia.

Nigerian Minister Visits, Discusses Opening Embassy

LD2402145095 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 24 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali at Carthage Palace this morning received Nigerian Finance Minister Anhhony Ani, who conveyed a message to him from Nigerian President Sani Abacha.

After the meeting, the Nigerian president's personal envoy said that the talks, during which he had conveyed a message of fraternity and friendship to the head of state, dealt with issues of mutual concern. He said they discussed the countries's excellent bilateral relations and the need to give them more impetus and consolidate them, particularly with regards to trade exchanges.

He pointed out that his country intended to open an embassy in Tunis. He added that he had briefed President Ben Ali, chairman of the Organization of African Unity, on the political and economic situation in Nigeria.

He said talks also dealt with the issue of Nigeria's nomination for the chairmanship of the African Development Bank.

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Kuwait

Foreign Minister on European Tour, Iraq

JN2302171795 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1949 GMT 22 Feb 95

[Interview with Foreign Minister Shaykh Sabah al-Ahamd al-Jabir al-Sabah by Nabil Sabbagh, in Paris; date not given; from the "Panorama" program—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Sabbagh] Your Excellency, is it a coincidence that your European tour, particularly of France and Britain, two UN Security Council member states, is taking place a short time before the UN Security Council meeting? Or, does this tour have its own objective, i.e., to explain the Kuwaiti stand to the UN Security Council member states, in case there is any ambiguity in understanding this stand?

[Al-Sabah] My visits to these states, particularly to Germany and Italy, is to congratulate them on their UN Security Council membership. At the same time, we hope these states will continue to pressure Iraq to force it to implement the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. We also hope that the UN Security Council, particularly its permanent member states, will not be divided, because this will weaken the UN Security Council, and when the UN Security Council becomes weak, the issue of [word indistinct] will become weak.

[Sabbagh] Have you noticed any positive response to the Kuwaiti stand during this tour?

[Al-Sabah] In fact, we noticed this even before I visited these states, because the adoption of a UN resolution must be respected. The UN resolution was adopted by the UN Security Council under the Seventh Chapter of the Charter. This Seventh Chapter of the Charter has been used only three times since the United Nations was established. It was used first in Korea, then in South Africa, and later during the occupation of Kuwait. So, this issue is binding on all the UN Security Council member states. Before saying binding, we say that all the UN Security Council member states believe that Iraq must comply with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

[Sabbagh] Mr. minister, Iraq says it has implemented all the UN Security Council resolutions, foremost of which is the recognition of Kuwait and its border, and that it does not detain any Kuwaiti prisoners. In Kuwait's opinion, what are the resolutions which Iraq still must implement?

[Al-Sabah] First of all, the recognition resolution is nothing new for Kuwait, because diplomatic relations have been exchanged since Kuwait's independence in 1963. Regarding borders and the recognition of borders, the demarcation of borders was based on an agreement signed in 1932. It was also signed by both the Iraqi Government and the Kuwaiti Government in 1963. So, there is nothing new. At the same time, the Kuwaiti Council of Ministers has issued a statement in which it welcomed this step and considered it a positive step forward on the right path. What we want Iraq to do is to end its people's suffering and to implement the UN Security Council resolutions on the prisoners issue. Human beings are important for the world and for our people in Kuwait. The other issue is to return property, particularly military property, to Kuwait. I believe Kuwait is interested in this, and this is why I always note the relevant resolutions.

[Sabbagh] So, there are two main issues: Returning Kuwaiti property and the PoW issue has not been resolved yet. This means there are two major obstacles. In case these two obstacles are removed, will Kuwait agree to Iraq's return to the Arab fold and, later, to the international community?

[Al-Sabah] I do not want to say more than that Iraq should implement these resolutions. Let us wait and see. I believe there will be no objection to pursuing the Arab march. I hope the Iraqi people's suffering will end. This can be achieved through the Iraqi regime's implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions.

[Sabbagh] We are living at a time when normalization between the Arab states and Israel has become, we may say, a normal issue. So, at this time, is it reasonable that normalization between one Arab state and another is beyond reach?

[Al-Sabah] Before I answer this question, I would like to ask who put us in these bad circumstances which make it easy for any Arab state to normalize its relations [with Israel]? The main cause is what happened to Kuwait at the hands of an Arab neighbor; this fragmented the entire Arab world. We must say the cause was Iraq's action against Kuwait.

[Sabbagh] Your Excellency, what is Kuwait's stand on the normalization of relations between some Arab states', particularly some Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] states, and Israel?

[Al-Sabah] I would like to say that I wish we would not be in a hurry on this issue. However, I do not want to interfere in any other country's affairs. Every country is free to adopt its own policy, but we should not be in a hurry before we see that peace has been achieved, particularly between Israel and Syria and Lebanon. We are interested in this, just like any other Arab people.

[Sabbagh] So, Kuwait will not normalize relations with the Hebrew state before the Israeli forces withdraw from the occupied Arab territories, the Syrian and Lebanese territories?

[Al-Sabah] I assure you we are committed to this issue.

[Sabbagh] Your Excellency, allow me to speak a little about the GCC. Kuwait is a GCC member, as we know. There are differences between Qatar and Bahrain.

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Cannot some of these states, particularly Kuwait, like Saudi Arabia, play the role of the mediator and give advice before moving to the internationalization of the border crisis between Qatar and Bahrain?

[Al-Sabah] We welcomed the Qatari and Bahraini statements in which they announced their acceptance of the mediation by the custodian of the two holy mosques between Bahrain and Qatar. At the same time, we are pleased to hear this acceptance from both countries. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia represents us as GCC states, and it has the weight to do so. We wish the custodian of the two holy mosques and his government success in achieving reconciliation between the two countries.

[Sabbagh] Your Excellency, undoubtedly, this question was asked to you many times. I mean about the Damascus Declaration. What is the latest about it? Some of the Syrian and Egyptian debts have recently been written off. Was this confined only to financial and economic issues? What about the military and security aspects in this declaration?

[Al-Sabah] I would like to say that the Damascus Declaration is a fact, and not ink on paper. I would like to say that the debts which have been written off have nothing to do with the Damascus Declaration; it was a previous decision. [Words indistinct] I do not want to say more than this.

[Sabbagh] Internally, how do you describe the relationship between the parliament and the government?

[Al-Sabah] The relationship is good. Our press try to show that there is a war between the parliament and the government. These are democratic parliaments. I do not believe that there is anything wrong. I assure you that there is mutual respect between the government and the parliament. Anything which takes place is marginal and tactical, and not essential.

[Sabbagh] What are the news media you watch or listen to from time to time?

[Al-Sabah] In fact, Radio Monte Carlo has a popularity in Kuwait and the Arabian Gulf. We say that it might have some negative aspects, but there are more positive points. We have respect and appreciation for it.

[Sabbagh] Mr. Kuwaiti deputy prime minister and foreign minister.

[Al-Sabah] Thank you. My pleasure.

Saudi Arabia

King Fahd Receives Syrian Foreign Minister al-Shar'

JN2302165995 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1615 GMT 23 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Holy Mecca—King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz of Saudi Arabia, custodian of the two holy mosques, received Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' in holy Mecca at dawn today. During the meeting, al-Shar' relayed a message to the Saudi monarch from his brother His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad.

The talks addressed the Arab state of affairs, developments in the peace process, and fraternal bilateral ties.

King Fahd Meets With PLO's 'Arafat in Mecca

JN2302153995 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 23 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat met with Saudi King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz in Mecca last night. He also met with Defense Minister Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz.

Prince Sultan Meets 'Arafat

LD2302151695 Riyadh Saudi Arabian Kingdom Radio Network in Arabic 1430 GMT 23 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] His Royal Highness Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, second deputy prime minister, minister of defense and aviation and inspector general, this afternoon received at his palace in Mecca His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat, the president of the state of Palestine, and the delegation accompanying him.

Defense Minister Meets 'Arafat

LD2302201195 Riyadh SPA in English 1918 GMT 23 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Makkah, Feb 23, SPA — Second Deputy Premier, Minister of Defence and Aviation and Inspector General Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz met here this afternoon with Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat and his accompanying delegation.

'Arafat Departs After Pilgramage

LD2302231795 Riyadh Saudi Arabian Kingdom Radio Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 23 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat, president of the State of Palestine, arrived today in al-Madinah coming from Jeddah within the framework of his current visit to the kingdom to perform the rites of the minor pilgrimage and visit the Prophet's noble mosque. [passage omitted]

His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat left al-Madinah this evening at the end of his visit to the kingdom after he had performed the minor pilgrimage rites, and visited the Prophet's noble mosque. [passage omitted]

Paper Says U.S. 'Sides With Israel' Against Arabs

MM2302092695 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 21 Feb 95 p 9

[Article by Bilal al-Hasan: "What Does the United States Want from the Arabs?"]

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[FBIS Translated Text] The United States has for some time been dealing with the Arab region in a unique diplomatic way. On the one hand it seeks to establish peace between the Arabs and Israel but, on the other, it follows a policy on the ground which could destroy that peace even before it is completed and crystallized. It accepts every Israeli request and rejects every Arab request while continuing to declare itself a neutral and honest mediator.

The United States sides with Israel against Lebanon and, in that situation, it only sees the armed popular resistance and refuses to see that Israel occupies a part of Lebanon. The United States sides with Israel against Syria and finds it strange that Syria wants equality and balance betwen it and Israel on the questions of withdrawal of forces from the borders and elimination of mass destruction weapons. It ignores the fact that Israel occupies Syrian territory, and not vice versa. The United States sides with Israel against the Palestinian Authority [PA] and ignores all the settlement plans and the systematic seizure of Jerusalem, ignoring the Oslo agreement, its provisions, and its "not-so-sacrosanct" dates, and, in that situation, it only discerns Israel's security demands, which have become alarm tactics, with no one knowing where they start or end. The United States sides with Israeli against Egypt for no reason other than the mere fact that Egypt is raising the slogans of the United States itself in calling for total nuclear disarmament and for the elimination of mass destruction weapons from the Middle East. Instead of being commended and thanked by the United States, Egypt is coming under U.S. pressures reaching the point of threats. The United States forgets that Israel, not Egypt, is the party which has nuclear weapons. The United States sides with Israel against all the Arabs on the question of economic boycott. When the Arabs say that the boycott could be lifted when comprehensive peace is established, the Americans get so angry with the Arabs that they forget the peace issue.

Amid this accumulation of hostile attitudes, there can be no doubt that many Arab capitals are beginning to wonder: Does this policy serve U.S. interests in the Arab region, and can such a policy lead to a stable and permanent peace in the region? Can peace be founded on the basis of giving Israel everything it wants and denying the Arabs everything they want?

In trying to answer all these disturbing questions, it is sufficient to note how that line has led to a deadlock in the peace negotiations with Syria and has brought the negotiations with the PA in Gaza close to failure. The Egyptian example is the most prominent in the picture of that failure, because the Egyptian-Israeli peace is over 15 years old but now it is faced with a strategic obstacle of nuclear dimensions. A stumble there would not only lead to the failure of the negotiations but would also open the way to nuclear competition, which would then be the only self-defense against Israeli might.

Everything in the region is deadlocked. Deadlock in politics is always dangerous. We no longer hear about anything other than the failure of the meetings between Rabin and 'Arafat and sharp arguments during the meetings between Musa and Peres, and about the impossibility of Syrian-Israeli meetings in Washington. Does that constitute a successful policy for a superpower which believes it has strategic interests in the Arab region?

Yemen

Prime Minister on Saudi Negotiations, U.S. Role

JN2302180595 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 23 Feb 95 p 23

[FBIS Translated Text] In an exclusive statement to AL-RA'Y, Yemeni Prime Minister 'Abd-al-'Aziz 'Abd-al-Ghani has said he will invite Jordanian Prime Minister His Excellency al-Sharif Zayd Bin- Shakir to visit Sanaa and attend the fourth session of the Higher Joint Jordanian-Yemeni Committee. The session will be hosted in the Yemeni capital after the blessed 'Id al-Fitr holiday. 'Abd-al-Ghani also said the exact date of the visit to be paid by His Excellency al-Sharif Zayd-Bin-Shakir will be left for the Jordanian prime minister to determine.

'Abd-al-Ghani praised relations between Jordan and Yemen as distinguished and profound. He said the upcoming session of the Higher Joint Jordanian-Yemeni Committee will further stress and strengthen these relations for the benefit of the two fraternal countries.

The committee held its last meeting in September, 1991. During its upcoming meeting, the committee will discuss ways to increase political and economic cooperation, promote trade exchange, activate the private sector, and bolster cooperation in the fields of agriculture, media, culture, housing, health, social and labor affairs, communications, electricity, antiquities and tourism, oil, mining, and telecommunications.

In reply to another question by AL-RA'Y, he denied the existence of any U.S. role in the current Riyadh negotiations his country and the Saudi Government are holding on how to end the border problem and on other issues of mutual interest.

Commenting on Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih's meeting in Sanaa yesterday with the U.S. charge d'affaires in Riyadh, 'Abd-al- Ghani said the purpose was just to hold consultations and that the meeting was in line with the policy of the Yemeni Government, which is eager to continue consultations with fraternal and friendly countries. He said the issue between his country and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a bilateral one and has nothing to do with any other political dimensions or any developments in the region.

The Yemeni prime minister also denied any link between current Yemeni-Saudi negotiations and recent Yemeni press campaigns launched by the media organs of the state and the General People's Congress against

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the Yemeni Reform Grouping, which is participating in the current government coalition, along with the General People's Congress. 'Abd-al-Ghani dismissed assertions that the press campaign was a prelude to ending the government coalition between the General People's Congress and the Yemeni Reform Grouping. He said there are no differences between the two parties and that the campaign by both parties' newspapers to project the differences was normal and will not affect the warm relations between the two parties.

In a news conference at his office in Sanaa yesterday afternoon, the Yemeni prime minister also spoke about the latest developments in the Yemeni-Saudi negotiations currently taking place in Riyadh. He said: The negotiations are scheduled to agree today on a memorandum of understanding, which will serve as a general framework that specifies mechanisms for solving disputes between the two countries. If, however, the two countries fail to agree on this memorandum of understanding, then negotiations between the two countries will stop, to be resumed after the 'Id al-Fitr holiday.

The Yemeni prime minister said he does not want to reveal what is going on between the two sides in Riyadh. He said: Things between us differ from time to time. He stressed that the agreement between his country's delegation and the Saudi delegation is based on considering the al-Ta'if agreement, signed 61 years ago, as an integral system. The two sides also agreed to resolve their dispute on the basis of doing no harm to anybody. They also agreed to resort to arbitration by the International Court of Justice and the Security Council.

The Yemeni prime minister also discussed the economic situation in his country. He said this situation has worsened and that prices have skyrocketed. This prompted the government to take several measures, including closing many shops, jailing some merchants, and issuing a new price list for some supplies. The government has also taken measures to curb smuggling and reduce the deficit in the general budget for this year. The government plans to present the budget to the House of Representatives when it resumes its meetings after the 'Id holiday.

'Abd-al-Ghani said prices have soared as a result of manipulation, speculation, and economic sabotage, which he considered an extension of the secessionist war in Yemen last year.

The Yemeni prime minister said the measures taken by the Yemeni Government have led to a drop in the price of the dollar against the Yemeni riyal. He said efforts will continue until the riyal restores its real value that reflects the real status of Yemen's economy. 'Abd-al-Ghani, however, was surprised during the news conference by what the representatives of the Yemeni press told him; namely, that the price of the dollar went up again last night to the level that preceded the recent government measures to control its price.

Commenting on his government's ties with the IMF and the World Bank, 'Abd-al-Ghani said they are good ties and that they are confined to consultations on ways to confront his country's economic problems. He denied that the IMF and the World Bank had dictated his government's economic program. He said: The program we presented to the House of Representatives is a national plan. However, the IMF and the World Bank have demonstrated a willingness to cooperate with us. We have welcomed this. We also welcome cooperation with any other international party that expresses a similar desire.

Official Denies Iranian Troops in Yemen Before, After War

LD2302145895 Tehran IRNA in English 1423 GMT 23 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Abu Dhabi, Feb 23, IRNA—A Yemeni official on Thursday strongly denied claims on presence of Iranian troops in Yemen and termed them as baseless. In an interview with Qatar News Agency in Doha, deputy secretary general of Yemen's Reformation Party, 'Abd-al-Majid al-Zandani, said, "we categorically deny presence of Iranian troops in Yemen before and after the civil war (1994) in Yemen."

He implicitly expressed willingness of Sanaa to join the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (PGCC). "Cooperation between brothers who live in a region is necessary and essential," he told IRNA.

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Ramadan Meets Bulgarian Team; Message for Saddam

JN2302175195 Baghdad INA in English 1455 GMT 23 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, Feb 23, INA—Vice President Ramadan has received a letter to President Saddam Husayn from chairman of the Bulgarian Radical National Party, Dr. Ivan Georgiev.

The letter was handed over by deputy-chairman of the Bulgarian party Romin Anatkov [name as received] during an audience here on Thursday [23 February].

The letter carried warm greetings to President Husayn who is seen a hero and a symbol of leaders who fight for the sovereignty, unity and freedom of their countries.

In his letter, Mr. Georgiev stressed his party as well as the Bulgarian people's support for the people of Iraq who stand firm in the face of the American policy of hegemony and the new world order.

The letter also expressed the Bulgarian party's desire to strengthen relations with the Iraq Command of the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party.

For his part, Mr. Ramadan expressed, on behalf of President Husayn, thanks for the sincere and noble feelings conveyed in the letter.

Prospects of cooperation between the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party and the Radical Nationalist Party were discussed during the audience.

Minister Seeks Enhanced Ties

JN2302143595 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1100 GMT 23 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 23 Feb (INA)—Health Minister Dr. Umid Midhat Mubarak today met with a delegation from the Bulgarian National Radical Party led by Romin Stevanov Anankov [name as transliterated], deputy leader of the party.

During the meeting, the minister reviewed the suffering of the Iraqi people, which has been caused by the continued unfair blockade, and inflicts grave damage on the people and disease and mortality rates.

The delegation's head pointed out that the aim of the visit to Iraq is to get acquainted with the Iraqi people's suffering, as well as to convey images about this suffering to the Bulgarian people who have good and historical relations with the Iraqi people.

The minister discussed with the delegation ways to enhance Iraqi-Bulgarian relations, particularly in the health fields.

Transport Minister Meets With Spanish Businessmen

JN2302132995 Baghdad INA in English 1200 GMT 23 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, Feb 23, INA—Minister of Transport and Communications Ahmad Murtada Ahmad on Wednesday conferred with the Spanish businessmen delegation headed by Gonzalio Orgoyoti.

The possibility for Spanish firms specialized in implementing transport projects after the embargo is lifted was discussed during the meeting.

The Spanish side expressed full readiness to put its best experiences to develop relations between Iraq and Spain.

Energy, Telecom Accords Signed

JN2302132695 Baghdad INA in English 0920 GMT 23 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, Feb. 23, INA—The Ministry of Transport and Communications and the Spanish businessmen delegation signed on Wednesday initial agreements in fields of energy and telecommunication. Head of the Spanish delegation reported that, adding that developed locomotives and new railways systems were offered for sale to Iraq with prices much cheaper than those by foreign states.

Transport Minister Meets With Brazilian Team

JN2302134995 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0845 GMT 23 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 23 Feb (INA)—Transport and Telecommunications Minister Dr. Ahmad Murtada Ahmad today met with Marcel Labo [name as transliterated], manager of the Brazilian Landon [name as transliterated] Company, which is specialized in the manufacture of trucks, and his delegation.

Discussions centered on the possibility of extending the Brazilian company's services to the ministry's installations and departments, particularly in the field of land transportation.

Health Minister Meets Jordanian Businessmen

JN2102180795 Baghdad INA in English 1430 GMT 21 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, Feb 21 (INA)—Minister of Health 'Umid Midhat on Tuesday met with Chief of Amman Industry Commerce [title as received] Khaldun Abu-Hassan and the accompanying delegation.

During the meeting the minister reviewed the suffering of the Iraqi people because of the continuation of the oppressive embargo which claimed lives of thousands of the Iraqi women, children and elderly.

Mr. Abu-Hassan said that they seriously work to lift the embargo imposed on Iraq since 1991.

Talabani Reiterates PUK 'Peace Endeavors'

NC2202165395 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1530 GMT 22 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Brother Jalal Talabani, secretary general of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK], met

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with the delegations representing the Ankara TRT Television Network and Turkish newspapers HURRIYET and MILLIYET the day before yesterday.

In a televised interview with the TRT correspondent, brother Talabani answered a number of questions that revolved around the current situation and the ongoing infighting in Kurdistan. Brother Talabani reiterated the PUK's peace endeavors to end fighting in the region. He also pointed to Barzani's continued rejection of all mediation efforts to end the fighting and resolve the dispute through peaceful means and constructive dialogue.

PUK Statement on Fighting in Irbil, Other Areas

NC2302165695 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1530 GMT 23 Feb 95

[Statement issued by the official spokesman of the PUK Political Bureau, in Irbil on 22 February—read by announcer]

[FBIS Translated Text] After the capture of Kaznazan by the Kurdistan Democratic Party [KDP] henchmen, other areas in the Irbil Governorate have been subjected to unending provocations and attacks by the KDP gangs. Civilians and their property have been the victims of such bestial attacks. Dozens of civilians—children, women, and the elderly—have been killed in Bani Shilawah as a result of KDP shelling.

On 18 February, the KDP forces launched a large offensive from three directions against the village of Seybardan. The offensive was foiled and the attackers were forced to retreat, leaving behind several troops dead or wounded. Last night, the KDP forces were spotted preparing acts of aggression. They launched an offensive against the area of (Hasaruk) and the PUK's [Patriotic Union of Kurdistan] front lines in Bani Shilawah and [words indistinct]. The brave PUK peshmergas confronted the KDP attackers, forcing them to retreat and flee, leaving the bodies of 18 troops and dozens of wounded on the battlefield.

The PUK would like to ask the KDP decision-making officials about the objectives of this fighting and in whose interest it is. The PUK wonders why the KDP is sending the sons of the Kurdish people to their deaths and why the KDP continues to refuse to respond to the peace appeals that have been made inside and outside the country. The KDP has reiterated its rejection of peace, democracy, the parliamentary experiment, law, and the interests of the Kurdish people. Hence, it behooves the Kurdish masses to unite their ranks to impose the will of peace and to silence the voices of the warmongers.

[Signed] The PUK Political Bureau, Irbil

[Dated] 22 February

'Corrupt' Rulers Criticized; Joint Arab Action Urged

JN2102095995 Baghdad BABIL in Arabic 11 Feb 95 p 1

[Article by Nuri Najm al-Marsumi, undersecretary of the Ministry of Culture and Information: "A Question to Rational, Brave Arabs"]

[FBIS Translated Text] If we cast a glance at the Arab homeland, we will see an entangled and complicated political map, both on the official and public levels. And, if we look more closely and try to disentangle and untie the knots, we will attain some degree of clarity, where colors become more distinct and the interlocking of trenches ends. We will see chaos on the official level and agitation on the public level.

On the official level, several rulers have made up their minds and allied themselves with the foreigner, thereby trampling upon the firm principles which should govern Arab rulers' movement. These rulers have either been nurtured in the womb of the colonial rule of the Arab homeland or have been brought up on obedience of the foreigner in foreign intelligence departments. Thus, their interests and those of the foreigner come first. As for the interests of their countries, they come last.

Contrary to these rulers, there are others who have been brought up in a popular environment and the national revolutionary movement. They have always believed in and worked for the independence of their countries and carried out programs for their awakening, development, and prosperity. Thus, they have been in constant conflict with the foreigner and his interests, institutions, and Zionist entity, which is the permanent guardian of imperialist interests in the region. Between these two groups of rulers, there is a third group of rulers who are confused in their leadership. Some of them cannot adopt a stand and others fluctuate between the two groups, seeking "safety" above all.

On the public level, it can be said without hesitation that a popular volcano is boiling in more than one Arab country. This volcano is a cause of anxiety for the corrupt rulers and frightens their masters in the United States and the Zionist entity.

Some Arab regimes try to avoid the disasters threatening the Arab homeland by making a sincere call for a return to the firm principles of joint Arab action and expanded meetings among the Arab leaders. However, the agents of the United States in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait tend to follow a different course based on maintaining the state of divisions and disintegration and try to contain, snub, and prejudice this call by holding formal meetings and bribing influential persons in this Arab regime or that Arab organization in order to prevent this call from becoming a reality in form and substance.

On the other hand, nationalist regimes which are sincere to the interests of their nation and which believe in the

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national and pan- Arab option, stand paralyzed and unable to take any effective joint action. Had these regimes reorganized their conditions and tried to win over the "confused" rulers and overcome the "vexation" of the U.S. Administration; and, had they rallied the ranks of the revolutionary popular forces in the Arab homeland behind them and emerged as one rank, would the blockade on Iraq, Libya, and Sudan and the plot against Yemen have continued?!! Had we had a small part of the courage of that commando who blew himself up among enemy soldiers in Netanya, would the foreigners and Zionists have continued to tamper with the resources of the Arab homeland? We leave this question to be answered by rational, brave Arabs only.

Arab League Notified of More Allied Overflights

JN2002121395 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0809 GMT 20 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 20 Feb (INA)—Iraq has informed the Arab League of the continued provision of facilities for U.S., British, and French aircraft by the rulers of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to violate the Iraqi airspace, thus posing a serious threat to Iraq's security, sovereignty, and national unity.

The details of those violations were included in a letter addressed by the Iraqi permanent representative to the Arab League to Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid yesterday.

The Iraqi permanent representative said that from 8-14 February, U.S., British, and French aircraft continued their violations of the Iraqi airspace. Taking off from bases in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, they carried out 479 hostile air sorties.

*Alexandria Summit Condemned, Secret Deals Alleged

95LH0068A Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 3 Jan 95 pp 1, 2

[Article by Salah al-Mukhtar: "The Alexandria Summit: What? When? How Long?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] All throughout the Arab world people are asking soberly and with surprise: "Why was the Alexandria mini-summit among King Fahd, the Egyptian president, and the Syrian president convened so hastily and without advance notice? What is the secret behind the verbal clashes among the regimes of Jordan, Syria, and Egypt despite their peace agreement with the Zionist entity and their conformity with U.S. policy?"

The Alexandria summit focused a spotlight on relationships that certain Arab and international parties would prefer not to have exposed. American arrogance, however, has caused it to neglect its Arab allies, who have provided America with very "significant" services, the most important of which was preparing the climate for the strike against the Iraqi people, followed by the economic embargo aimed at annihilating millions of Iraqis. Last but not least, they handed over recognition of the Zionist entity on a golden platter, without this entity's having offered anything except increased intransigence and insistence on dictating its terms to the Arab parties who have made peace with it. Despite all of these "significant services," America's repayment was to give Israel a free hand to humiliate the Arab parties and push them in any direction it wanted, even if this isolated them or resulted in popular condemnation and ripped apart any rationale or logic they had used to justify their peace with it.

After extreme American promises to support the Arab regimes that participated in killing hundreds of thousands of Iraqis through the war and the embargo, to convert their countries into "incomparable paradises," and to make the Arab rulers "regional lords" equal to the Zionist entity, there came the test of the American promises. They turned out to be merely illusions and attempts to entangle and deceive, aimed at enticing Arab regimes into attacking Iraq and recognizing the Zionist entity without giving them anything that would enable them to defend themselves among the Arab people!

If we set aside the fact that the U.S. and Gulf financial aid was merely droplets of water dribbled on a raging fire needing oceans of money—deepening the potentially ruinous economic crises of the regimes "friendly" to the United States—and we deal only with the political settlement of the Arab-Zionist conflict, we can isolate several indicators that America is embracing all the old Zionist demands and positions and is categorically rejecting the demands and positions of the Arab settlement regimes.

The first indicator was the dropping of the demand for a comprehensive resolution of the Arab-Zionist conflict, which was the Arab settlement regimes' principal demand, and adoption of a partial, individual solution, which was a principal Zionist demand. While the Arab "representatives" from Syria, Jordan, Palestine, and Lebanon were immersed in collective negotiations with a Zionist delegation in Washington, the Arab regimes were surprised by the conclusion of a separate agreement between the Zionist entity and the Palestine Liberation Organization (the Gaza-Jericho agreement)!

Quickly and anxiously, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria condemned this agreement on the basis that it was antithetical to a comprehensive solution and would lead to weakening the positions of the Arab "representatives" participating in a united Arab delegation. America claimed that it had not known of the secret Zionist-Palestinian negotiations, which was proved a lie by subsequent events, when U.S. President Bill Clinton and his secretary of state, Warren Christopher, intervened personally to "encourage" the Jordanian Government to conclude a separate peace agreement with the Zionist entity, thus reducing the number of critical Arab parties to two, Lebanon and Syria!

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Then the Syrian regime came under enormous pressure after it found itself alone and deprived of its most important allies—the Jordanian regime and the PLO. It realized that its negotiations with the Zionist entity lacked the most important element of pressure and influence: a united Arab position that would link the peace to all the demands of the various Arab parties.

The Syrian regime's confusion was heightened by the second indicator: the normalization of relations between the Zionist entity and some Arab Gulf states. This eliminated the basic Arab demand espoused by the regimes of the political settlement, which was exchanging Arab recognition of the Zionist entity for the complete return of all occupied Arab territory! The Palestinian and Jordanian agreements with the Zionist entity and the rapid normalization of the Gulf states' relations with it—the result of American advice—nullified one of the most important elements of pressure against the Zionist entity, essential to its acceptance of the principle of total withdrawal from all Arab territories. It also forced a clash between the Syrian demand for complete Zionist withdrawal from the Golan and the total Zionist intransigence supported officially by the United States, which rejected a relatively positive United Nations position on the Golan.

Thus the Hafiz al-Asad regime found itself naked and stripped of any cover or negotiating strength, while the Zionist entity and America stand strongly behind a clear demand that is extremely dangerous for the future of the Syrian regime. This is complete recognition of the Zionist entity and rapid normalization of relations with it without reservations, in return for the official return of the Golan. The Golan would either remain in the status of a 99-year lease under Zionist sovereignty or be demilitarized and placed under a U.S. military protectorate!

The dangers of the U.S.-Zionist initiative took shape before the eyes of the exhausted Syrian regime when it realized that what had happened so far between some of the Arabs and the Zionist entity had occurred within an iron framework: acceptance of the traditional and basic Zionist positions and terms that had been proposed since the outbreak of the Zionist-Arab conflict and complete renunciation of the essential Arab terms and positions. This is the third indicator, which is the dropping of the Arab demand for a just solution. The Zionist-Arab conflict did not arise as a result of the occupation of the Golan, the West Bank, Gaza, the Sinai, or southern Lebanon. These occupations were the result of the 1948 occupation of Palestine, which led to wars from which the new occupations emerged.

Therefore, the return of the occupied Arab territories, whether in full or in part, is not the true Arab solution, but an unjust solution that is one of the requirements of the Zionist solution, which has focused for many decades on a basic demand: Arab political recognition of the Zionist entity. The Syrian regime understood the dangerous implication of the three indicators and realized that it was moving toward suicide if it contented itself with repeating what the PLO, the Jordanian regime, and the Gulf regimes had done. Therefore, it mustered its forces, and President al-Asad called the Egyptian president and the Saudi king and agreed with them to hold a mini-summit. His purpose was to persuade the Gulf states to halt normalization and link it to the results of the Syrian negotiations. He also wanted to mobilize the Arab countries in the name of the Arab League to support the Syrian negotiator in order to soften the U.S. and Zionist positions.

However, Hafiz al-Asad, who has perfected the art of organized blackmail, wanted Saudi Arabia, the Gulf states, America, the Zionist entity, and the Husni Mubarak regime to understand that, unless he obtained support, he would move toward improving his relations with Iraq! This veiled blackmail was expressed in statements by Syrian officials during the Alexandria summit, in which they said that the summit would discuss the issue of calling for lifting of the embargo against Iraq!

But what happened? After al-Asad, Fahd, and Husni talked, a joint statement was issued that said nothing about Iraq except to repeat the anti-Iraqi U.S. position, which calls upon Iraq to implement the UN resolutions for the embargo to be lifted, ignoring the fact that lifting the embargo is conditional only on implementation of paragraph 22 of Resolution 687, which Iraq has accomplished in its entirety?! This means that the positions of many non-Arab countries, such as Russia, France, China, Spain, and Nigeria, is more "Arab" than that of "America's Arabs," because the former have openly called for lifting the economic embargo.

Similarly, Jordan was attacked by Mr. Husni Mubarak within the context of a fourth indicator. This is that America has begun to mount a campaign against the Husni Mubarak regime, understood by the latter to be a prelude to a strike against Egypt and making the Zionist entity an overlord in the region, as the Cairo-based official newspaper AL-JUMHURIYAH stated in an article written by its editor!

America's purpose was to link the relations of the settlement regimes to specific conditions and to force them under the pressure of threats and blackmail or by deception to accept the basic Zionist terms and retreat from the basic Arab terms. It encouraged the Zionist entity to be intransigent and not to offer concessions. It is America who has worked to create a crisis of confidence and disputes among the Arabs of the settlement. It is she who initiated a new, very dangerous game, in which American writer Jim Hoagland, in the WASHINGTON POST newspaper, has begun to work on toppling the Arab regimes and establishing new, fresh alternatives, especially in Egypt and Saudi Arabia, to induce them to accept the Zionist terms openly and officially, and to destroy the bases of economic stability in their countries, as a preliminary for the expected American replacement.

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What does this mean? Simply and clearly, it means that what America has done and is doing is nothing more than implementing its overall plan, which is to destroy the foundations of unity and stability in the Arab countries, one after the other, beginning with the countries that have independent, nationalist and patriotic agendas. It will then extend this to all the other Arabs, including America's "friends" who have served it and given it the souls of Iraqi children, the hearts of the stone-throwing youth of Palestine, and the smiles of thousands of Algerian children who have fallen as martyrs to the Zionist-U.S. hostility toward the Arab nation.

It is impossible for America to dominate the Arab homeland permanently if there are strong, stable, and competent Arab regimes, even if they are Western in orientation, because this conflicts with the goal of making the region an open, fenceless plantation tended by the Zionist and American feudal lords.

Therefore, after Iraq was attacked and embargoed, it became necessary to move on to "preparing" the circumstances of the countries subservient to America in order to facilitate the American plan and ensure its influence, as well as to avoid popular disturbances, which result from the existence of exhausted, debtor regimes who bear the "sins" of all the negative developments.

Within this context, the Zionist intransigence in the negotiations is a political fruit that America is gradually harvesting. The dissolution of the unity of the "Arabs of the settlement" is part of the requirements of this plan. Therefore, Hafiz al-Asad's blackmail tactic this time was apparently a naive expression of his profound sensation of being in an inescapable predicament!

Iraq has repeatedly warned of the long-range consequences of hostile action toward the Iraqi people and blindly falling in line behind America and the Zionist entity. It has clearly stated that what is sought is the destruction of all the Arab countries, not just Iraq, including the countries whose governments have provided "significant" services to America and the Zionist entity. America is acting in accordance with her sacred constitution to double the dollar. As for the Zionist entity, it is acting in accordance with the teachings of the Talmud and not just according to those of the Torah, which makes it intent on crushing anyone cooperating with it with a severity that may be harsher than the severity of Zionism with its enemies!

The destruction of Egypt through the export of AIDS, the economic crises caused by the International Monetary Fund's conditions, the spreading of plagues and diseases in it, and the sabotage of its agriculture is purely a U.S.-Zionist goal. This process cannot be stopped except through serious self-examination, a review of what has happened, a return to Arab solidarity, and revitalization of the Arab League despite all its deficiencies, with emphasis on its being the proper framework under these circumstances to combat the organized operations to splinter the Arab countries. These operations are designed to establish a "Middle East regime" on the "rubble of Arab nationalism," as Zionist and American sources, with the American writer Flora Lewis at their forefront, have said.

Does the consciousness and will needed for this reexamination still exist? Or must we witness the tragic events that will befall Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon at the hands of America and Zionism, using strangely shaped and named tools?

Agricultural Companies, Secrets Under Scrutiny

95LH0069A Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 4 Jan 95 p 5

[Report by Ghalib Zanjil in Baghdad on interviews with government officials; date not given: "Secrets of 244 Iraqi Agricultural Companies; Ministry of Agriculture Acknowledges Gain From Only 5 Companies"]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Zanjil] We read in the press and see on television scores of company advertisements of vegetable and animal products. We hear considerable talk about speculation on the stock exchange involving companies that do nothing but advertise about their activities, which continue to be confined to paper!

If someone were to report that 244 agricultural companies of various kinds were established after the oppressive blockade was imposed and that, many times, most of these companies are only advertising signs in a dried-up ditch or on a building for raising chickens, of which only a wall remains without a roof, if someone were to report that, he would be reporting something odious.

The number of 244 agricultural companies might surprise us. We might be inclined to imagine that these companies—if they were in fact productive—could shield us from some of the blockade's severity. But the facts are completely the opposite. Let us hear from influential people in agriculture and company organizations.

At the outset we should go to the Ministry of Trade, which is the authority responsible for establishing a company, any company, and empowering it to do business. We met with Ma'ruf al-Rawi, the Ministry's general registrar of companies.

What is the number of agricultural companies that have been licensed since the imposition of the evil blockade?

[Al-Rawi] The number of agricultural companies established since 1990 is 244 of various types. Total capital invested in these companies is 1,024,762,000 Iraqi dinars [ID]. This was a very considerable amount at that time.

[Zanjil] What special privileges did the state give to these companies?

[Al-Rawi] The privileges that may be given to joint-stock companies are not defined in the Law of Companies, but can be conveyed by sector authorities (the ministry that

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is concerned with the companies' activity), which support it in various ways. For example, support given to joint-stock companies is greater than support given to private stock companies and greater than support for limited companies, because the base of stockholders in the first category is larger and broader. We should understand that support given by the ministry concerned takes the form of loans, seed, chemical materials, land, or any other incentives.

[Zanjil] Since you are responsible for legally establishing a company, what would your role be if the company violates the terms of establishment by either not producing, slowing down production, or changing its type of products?

[Al-Rawi] The law requires every company to restrict itself to the activities that it commits itself to when it is established. It is obliged to allocate its capital to pursue this activity and no other. Article 139 of Law of Companies No. 36 for 1983 (amended) requires that a year pass after the company's establishment before action can be taken to abolish the company, if it cannot pursue its activities without a legal excuse, or if it has ceased to pursue its activities for a continuous period of more than a year. There is continual monitoring by this office over companies by requiring them to submit final annual accounts. There is also coordination with sector authorities (Ministry of Agriculture) represented by the General Investments Board. This is in regard to overseeing companies whose establishment was previously approved or to investigate their pursuit of activities specified in the establishment contract.

[Zanjil] How is the cooperation between you and the Ministry of Agriculture carried out, in order to achieve supervision over these companies?

[Al-Rawi] Article 18 of the Companies Law requires the economic sector authorities concerned, which is the Ministry of Agriculture, to open a dialogue with agricultural companies in order to confirm that their activity conforms to the national development plan. This is the first thing; then, there are several regulations that oblige—through the Law of Companies—the company or the registrar to inform the sector authority, for example, if the company has ceased its activity, or if its losses are more than 50 percent, or if the company has reduced its capital, modified the establishment contract, or is pursuing a different activity than that agreed upon. Moreover, we inform the sector authority (the Ministry of Agriculture) in the event the company defaults on transferring ownership of projects specified in the terms of establishment.

[Zanjil] What do you think about certain companies speculating in shares?

[Al-Rawi] We do not want companies to change from their main activity to stock speculation. We seriously monitor how the capital is disbursed. This supervision will ultimately prevent that.

[Zanjil] How do you view the agricultural company's boards of directors? Are they in fact prepared to carry out their tasks?

[Al-Rawi] First, the company is a commercial project. Its founders must put that at the head of their concerns. Profit is their goal. There is no doubt of that. However, certain companies' boards of directors are dominated by the chairman of the board. Naturally, this does not serve the company's interests, nor achieve its goals. However, responsibility for that rests on the General Board.

[Zanjil] In my interview with the general registrar of companies in the Ministry of Trade, he told me that the number of companies that have been established since 1990 is 244. This means that these companies were facing two challenges. The first was for them to produce to counter the blockade and to provide the food the country requires. Second, they had to fully prepare themselves to use local raw materials for their products without any thought of imports from abroad. This is the basis upon which the agricultural companies operated following the imposition of the blockade on our country. Could they in fact achieve that? If the reply was negative, of what value was the existence of these companies? Could any good be expected from them? I took these and many other questions to the Ministry of Agriculture. This is my interview with the director general of agricultural investments, Badr Rashid.

[Rashid] The large number of agricultural production companies (vegetable and animal) should not be difficult for you to understand. Some of these companies are microscopic, microscopic in the full sense of the word. For example, it might be a small chicken coop to raise only a few chickens. Its owner and some members of his family or friends have given it a company name. Or it could be a small lake, more like what is in a ditch, on whose banks some friends agreed to establish a company! These companies mean nothing. We don't supply them with much, and we pay little attention to them.

[Zanjil] But they are licensed companies and accountable?

[Rashid] Do you mean, when they act like giants but are really midgets?

[Zanjil] Yes.

[Rashid] These are small companies, and we do not depend on them for production. Whatever comes from them is good surplus but, for the most part, we rely on and concentrate on five large and varied supercompanies—if that term is correct—in comparison to their other sisters. These companies have been in business since the middle eighties, when they were transferred from the Socialist sector to the mixed sector. Stock in them was sold to citizens. Their capital, through their assets, is very, very large. They are producing at full capacity. But I should point out that the iniquitous blockade has hurt them in terms of industrial equipment,

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as well as the availability of spare parts. However, in any case, they are still very productive. One should point out that these five companies are dedicated to livestock production (chickens and meat), with one specializing in seed production.

As for other companies that will be subsidized in the future and in the near future, there are 16 joint-stock companies. These companies are responsible for planting vast areas of land. The capital of the smallest of these companies is over ID160 million. Most of them were established last year and, in fact, five of them after July 1994. You should know that agriculture is not an easy operation like trade, whose results come early.

[Zanjil] What is your role in assisting these companies to accomplish their mission?

[Rashid] We give subsidies, seed, fertilizer, and insecticides. This is what we can give them. We take into account the classification of the project's position on our agricultural chart. To explain: There are three categories whose subsidies are of three grades. The first category is land that is irrigated with running water or by devices or continual rains—north of the rain line. We consider this type of project to be guaranteed production, and we give seed, fertilizer, and insecticides commensurate with its requirements and at low prices. The second category is projects that are located south of the rain line or land that is irrigated from time to time. We give these projects the above services, but at a different price and with less concern than for the first category, because they do not have a 100-percent-production guarantee. The third category that depends on uncertain rain or unsystematic irrigation must look after itself.

There are eight cold-storage companies, 50 companies limited to agricultural production, and 65 companies limited to livestock production. One must point out that many of these companies are small projects and some are idle at the present time, either because of a lack of raw materials or break-downs in machinery. Spare equipment cannot be provided to them.

[Zanjil] What are your actions when a company fails to carry out its obligations?

[Rashid] We follow up on all companies in the different categories. We have taken actions with regard to companies (cattle stations) sold by the state to shareholders and have voided the contract with some. We have sent warnings to other companies and have given them a grace period that expired at the end of 1994. Their situation will be evaluated and appropriate action taken. These companies must produce, and they have no excuse for anything else.

[Zanjil] But there are companies that have not produced for more than two years and others that have most of their equipment out of order.

[Rashid] That is correct. With regard to the first group, mismanagement has damaged them considerably. Shareholders have pointed that out, even if only recently, and they have reorganized their management cadres. They will be pursuing their activities soon. As for the other group, they have recently prepared land for planting in al-Mawsil and Salah al-Din. They are striving to resume and widen their activities soon.

[Zanjil] Certain companies "like to" speculate in shares?

[Rashid] That is impossible with our strict supervision and oversight.

[Zanjil] Will everyone who has a sum of money continue to be able—legally—to establish an agricultural company on paper?

[Rashid] As a ministry, in cooperation with the general registrar of companies, we depend on the company having a material basis (land or equipment or a plant). We do not license any company unless it has such a basis.

[Zanjil] How do you see the future of agriculture, then?

[Rashid] We must understand that agriculture in Iraq, following the imposition of the oppressive blockade, has undergone very considerable development. The small amount of acreage that has not been planted by peasants and farmers is being cultivated by companies. These companies' percentage of the crops might not be more than one in a thousand. What is happening now? We are depending on the peasant and the farmer. The phenomenon of agricultural companies today is a new matter that we must support. We believe that we will continue to depend on the peasant and the farmer for a long time, until we satisfy our matter justly. So that the picture may be complete for the reader, it would be fair to say that we do not leave newborn agricultural companies alone without learning about them. We have given the director general of agricultural investments some ideas about the activities of certain companies.

[Zanjil] In my interview with the director general of registration concerning certain agricultural companies, I heard similar views. Al-Atyaf is a company that was established in July 1994. Its establishment contract stipulated that it would cultivate 13,000 dunums. I was told that it has completed 85 percent of its planting for this project by its director, Engineer Khadir 'Abbas al-Amarah:

[Zanjil] Your project basically is agricultural, but you are now breeding fish?

[Al-Amarah] There is no objection to that. We are planting and have not violated the terms of establishment. We have money that we are investing in another activity.

[Zanjil] But doesn't this carry your activity far from agriculture, in addition to its being not specified by the establishment terms?

[Al-Amarah] We are operating in accordance with a plan and a clear activity program. The terms of establishment

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do not prohibit our being engaged in another field, after we have fulfilled the contract.

[Zanjil] They say that certain agricultural companies plant and produce only on paper and speculate on the stock exchange.

[Al-Amarah] Ask the Ministry of Agriculture about us.

[Zanjil] Do you have any complaints?

[Al-Amarah] We are asking for more state support for our projects.

[Zanjil] Presumably, you are responsible for yourself. The state supports those who have a better claim than you for support, and I mean the peasants.

[Al-Amarah] Perhaps that is true, but what is required from the state is that it put an end to the routine that certain officials pursue against us. The state has the right to protect shareholders' money, but we have the right to request it to consider our needs seriously and expeditiously and make a decision with regard to our various activities, or if we need to increase capital or develop company projects. The routine is very deadly. We want the state to lift the sword from the necks of agricultural companies, even though we respect the state's right to monitor, oversee, and even supervise if it wishes.

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Rabin Denies Knowledge of Washington Summit in Apr

TA2302162995 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1500 GMT 23 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin says he knows nothing about a summit meeting slated to be held in Washington in early April, but if the United States initiates such a meeting, there is no reason why he should not attend.

AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT quotes political sources in Cairo as saying that King Husayn, President Mubarak, Prime Minister Rabin, and PLO Chairman 'Arafat—all those who participated in the Cairo summit—have all been invited to attend the summit meeting. They will be hosted by President Clinton. It is possible that the heads of other states will also be invited to attend the meeting.

Rabin Tells SLA 'Blood Alliance' Will Continue

TA2302174595 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1500 GMT 23 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The cabinet toured the security zone in south Lebanon today and were briefed by IDF [Israel Defense Forces] and SLA [South Lebanese Army] officers. In a meeting with the SLA commander, General Antoine Lahd, Prime Minister Rabin said there is a blood alliance between the two armies, which will continue. Our political correspondent Udi Segal accompanied the tour:

[Begin recording] [Segal] In the early hours of the morning the prime minister convened his soldiers—the ministers—and led them in two columns to the helicopters which took them under heavy security on a field tour. The cabinet, almost in full formation, accompanied by the chief of staff and the commander of the Northern Command, visited Marj 'Uyun and one of the strongholds on the northern border. Minister 'Uzi Bar'am sums up:

[Bar'am] It was excellent. Rabin the defense minister is different from Rabin the prime minister; he is smoother, nicer, more to the point and since was in Lebanon, far away from demonstrations and from everything else, his performance was 100 percent.

[Segal] At SLA headquarters in Marj 'Uyun, the cabinet met with Gen. Lahd, who referred to the partnership between the armies. Rabin told him that there is a blood alliance between Israel and the SLA, which we will not violate. From there the ministers left for a stronghold on the Lebanese border. Rabin used the time between briefings with the senior commanders to hear the enlisted men, who carry the burden of routine security. [passage omitted]

[Rabin] The aim of the tour is to give the cabinet members, who usually hear reports, an opportunity to see for themselves what characterizes IDF and SLA activity in the security zone along the border. I am convinced that it was also important for the SLA.

[Segal] The IDF commanders told the ministers that they want more backing from politicians and the media, which attack them after every hitch. We carry out hundreds of missions daily, the platoon commanders told the ministers. There is a war going on here. We are not restricted in our responses, but we would like more support from the home front. [passage omitted]

The ministers ended their tour with a meeting with the leaders of northern settlements a short time ago. The prime minister told them that their ability to stand firm serves as a model for the entire nation. [end recording]

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English at 1600 GMT on 23 February adds that on his tour of the north, Rabin said "Israel and Lebanon could reach a peace agreement within nine months. Rabin repeated Israel's commitment to the SLA and lashed out at Lebanon and Syria for not restraining the Hizballah organization, but he held out the chance for peace with Beirut and ultimately with Damascus." In a recorded passage, Rabin says: "I believe that if the Government of Lebanon will be guided only by serving the national interest of Lebanon, taking into account the combination of the population of Lebanon, I believe it will be within nine months that we can achieve peace between Lebanon and Israel."

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1600 GMT adds that Gen. Lahd told the cabinet that "Iran is financing Hizballah activities and Syria is orchestrating them." In one of the briefings, the ministers were told "that in the past year terrorists, three quarters of them Hizballah, carried out some 400 attacks in the security zone."]

Peres on Mubarak Meeting, Christopher Visit

TA2302171995 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1605 GMT 23 Feb 95

[Telephone interview with Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres by Mikha'el Tuchfeld; place not given—live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Tuchfeld] Good evening Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres.

[Peres] Good evening to you.

[Tuchfeld] You have just completed a series of talks with Egyptian President Mubarak and Foreign Minister Musa. You said that you all reached agreement on some issues, but not on others. What have Israel and Egypt agreed on?

[Peres] First, let us differentiate between general political relations and the nuclear nonproliferation issue. We decided that the dispute over the nuclear issue will not affect Egyptian-Israeli political and economic relations. Two, Egypt did not make its signing or not signing the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT] conditional on us signing it. In other words, our signing is not on the agenda. Three, we did not talk about changing plans at

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the present time; at issue is how to reach an agreement for the future. In these issues we achieved some progress, but some problems remain unsolved.

[Tuchfeld] Does this include the basic problem of Israel signing the NPT?

[Peres] No, this is not a controversial issue, this is not the main issue.

[Tuchfeld] Did Egypt link this issue with progress on the Palestinian track?

[Peres] No, absolutely not.

[Tuchfeld] Was the Palestinian issue raised at all today?

[Peres] It was raised, but not in this context, rather as an independent issue—not as something conditional or related to the NPT.

[Tuchfeld] You probably heard that Egyptian political sources have reported that a summit meeting will be held between President Clinton, Prime Minister Rabin, President Mubarak, King Husayn, and Yasir 'Arafat in Washington early April. Do you know anything about such a meeting?

[Peres] No, not yet. Such a meeting has not been scheduled yet.

[Tuchfeld] Does this mean that the report is false?

[Peres] I know nothing about it, so I cannot say whether it is true or not. Nobody has spoken to me about it.

[Tuchfeld] Does the fact that Secretary of State Christopher intends to visit the region in early March indicate that progress has been made on some issues, or does it simply mean that these issues are at a complete stalemate?

[Peres] Neither of the two. I think it means the United States believes there are chances for progress. Mr. Warren Christopher is coming to probe these chances.

[Tuchfeld] Initially only Dennis Ross was slated to arrive, so why is Christopher coming in person?

[Peres] Yes, this was the initial decision, but then they decided to upgrade the level.

[Tuchfeld] Why did they make this decision?

[Peres] Because they believe they need to exert a more serious and profound efforts.

[Tuchfeld] So it does not indicate that something has happened on the ground?

[Peres] I think not.

Peres: No Changes on NPT Stance Until Threats Eliminated

TA2302193895 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 23 Feb 95

[Political correspondent Gadi Sukenik video report; italicized passages in English]

[FBIS Translated Text] Israel is refusing to acquiesce to Egypt's demand to discuss supervision of Israel's nuclear installations within the framework of a broad international forum. This demand was raised again today during lengthy discussions conducted by Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres with Egyptian President Husni Mubarak and Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa. Israel is refusing to introduce any changes in the present situation until all threats to its existence are removed. Our political correspondent Gadi Sukenik accompanied Foreign Minister Peres to Egypt:

[Begin recording] [Sukenik] The foreign minister left for Cairo this morning with tensions reaching new heights. Egypt is refusing to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT] unless Israel does so by April. Israel joining the treaty would entail international inspection of Dimona and perhaps other places as well. The argument had previously reached a stage during which Peres and his Egyptian counterpart Musa exchanged shouts.

Today, however, President Mubarak adopted a much more conciliatory tone. He said that a way must be found to solve the crisis and sent the two ministers to the Egyptian Foreign Ministry to continue the negotiations.

For the first time, Peres proposed a timetable in principle according to which two years after peace agreements are signed including with Iran, Iraq, and Libya, Israel will enter negotiations on international supervision of its nuclear installations. The Egyptians did not reject the proposal, but at the same time they were not enthusiastic about it.

Did you see any advance in the new Israeli formula concerning the nuclear issue?

[Musa] *I think I will stick to what I have said and what Mr. Peres has said, that there are areas of agreement and areas of disagreement still, and our contacts will continue.*

[Sukenik] In Musa's office we also saw a familiar face, Egyptian Ambassador to Israel Muhammad Basyuni, who was recalled a week ago for consultations in Cairo and who has not been seen since.

Is your stay in Cairo for the last week related to this confusion?

[Basyuni] *No, no, I come usually from time to time for consultations, for talks. It has nothing to do with....*

[Sukenik, interrupting] *Are you coming back to us?*

[Basyuni] *Maybe today, maybe tomorrow.*

[Sukenik] The negotiations centered on Egypt's demand that the Israeli nuclear weapons issue be discussed in the framework of the multilateral talks disarmament committee, which means, in effect, a simultaneous discussion with dozens of countries—most of them Arab—on Israel's nuclear issue. Mr. Peres gave an unequivocal negative reply:

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[Peres] If we have no peace, we will insist on preserving our capabilities and our ability to deter whoever wants to attack us. We maintain that a policy of destruction is no less dangerous than mass destruction weapons. Iran is interested in destroying us, and this is our problem. We have no problems with Egypt. [end recording]

'Source': No Reason for Concessions to Egypt on NPT

TA2402065795 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0500 GMT 24 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A senior Israeli source said that for all intents and purposes, Egypt has no means at its disposal with which to pressure Israel to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT] and that, therefore, there is no reason to make any concessions on this issue. The source told our political correspondent Shlomo Raz that enough countries are already prepared to sign the NPT and that Egypt's threat is thus meaningless. The source noted that any country that had signed the NPT in the past and now seeks to withdraw from it could only do so by going through a special procedure. The source expressed the assessment that Egypt would refrain from such a move.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0505 GMT on 24 February, in a follow-up report, adds that "following the meetings held yesterday among Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres, Egyptian President Husni Mubarak, and Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa, Jerusalem sources noted that the level of tension between the two countries had decreased. Although the crisis continued, it is more under control." The report states that "any country that has signed the NPT remains a signatory and that its signature does not become invalid after a certain date." The report notes that "if at least 85 countries sign the NPT, it is automatically renewed and remains binding on any country that has ever signed it in the past. The source expressed the assessment that over 85 countries are prepared to renew the NPT and that U.S. fears in this respect are totally unfounded."]

Egypt Seen Serving as U.S. 'Proxy' on NPT

TA2402112695 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 24 Feb 95 p 8

[Commentary by Alon Pinkas: "Egypt's NPT Strategy Is All Politics"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Politics—not strategic concerns—may well be what's fueling current tensions between Jerusalem and Cairo over Israel's reluctance to sign the nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT].

But with changes in the world order, the interests of Egypt and Israel are changing, and the catalyst is their relationship with the U.S., the avowedly evenhanded broker in the Middle East.

Israel's long-standing reasons for refusing to sign the NPT have been expounded in many sessions of the multilateral Arms Control and Regional Security talks. Any talk of nonconventional weapons, Israel maintains, must be preceded by bilateral peace agreements with all the countries of the region.

In the context of arms control, Israel's definition of the Middle East stretches from Mauritania to Iran; the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] Intelligence Branch includes Pakistan.

Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres yesterday presented Egypt with Israel's view that the region can be made nuclear-free two years after the conclusion of separate peace agreements. This is a departure from the previous policy prompted by international and regional changes.

Israel's previously uncompromising posture has been cracked by Egypt and no longer looks sustainable. But the political results are unclear and may not benefit either side.

Governments since the mid-1960s have used the same line to denote the country's nuclear policy: "Israel will not be the first to introduce nuclear weapons into the Middle East." There was a time when that deliberately vague line was one of the few permanent features of regional politics.

By avoiding the issue, Israel not only concealed the facts, but prevented serious debate about the regional impact of nuclear strategy.

The policy was so vague that it allowed several interpretations: that Israel has nuclear capability; that it does not have nuclear weapons but may be able to produce or procure them; or that it does not have, and may not be able to get, atomic weapons. It also left in doubt that precise meaning of "introduce."

The perception in the Arab world that Israel possesses nuclear weapons has been enough of a deterrent. Israel supposedly would contemplate their use only if on the verge of total military collapse and physical annihilation.

However, this obscurity has served everybody's interests: the Arab world's and the superpowers', as well as Israel's. By maintaining vagueness over its nuclear power, Israel never posed a direct threat to the Arab world.

However, an explicit Israeli declaration that "We have nuclear weapons" would lead the Arab world to consolidate its position against the threat and would require Israel to define the threshold for use, narrowing its room for strategic maneuvering.

Also, vagueness allowed Israel to maintain good patron-client relations with the U.S. during the era of superpower struggle without impelling the U.S. to take a position on the issue. A declaration of nuclear capabilities would have complicated Israel's relations with Congress, which is ostensibly committed to global arms control.

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The Middle East peace process and the disintegration of the Soviet Union seem to make the policy inapplicable.

Egypt, with its persistent demands that Israel join the 169 signatories to NPT as its renewal approaches, wants Jerusalem to reassess its nuclear policy.

Egypt is out to change the rules of the game, says Prof. Avner Kohen, a researcher at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology who specializes in Israel's nuclear doctrine. He proposed that Israel take a hard look at its policy and evaluate its contemporary relevance. He is not calling for an open declaration of nuclear capability, but warns that changes in the region warrant at least a review.

"Since the Gulf war, the Egyptians have been signaling that the old rules of the game are no longer applicable," Kohen said. "The NPT is part of a normative world order, which, even if it lacks coercive powers and is flawed, is superior to complete anarchy."

He emphasizes that even if Israel cannot allow itself to sign the NPT, which it shouldn't at this point, it must be willing to engage in a constructive dialogue with Egypt on the issue.

"The NPT benefits Israel despite the fact that it cannot sign it as a nonnuclear state. Allowing the Egyptians to inspect the Nahal Soreq nuclear facility is insulting, because it is already subject to inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency," he said in an unusually open seminar held this week at Yad Tabenkin.

That still leaves unresolved the issue of Egypt's interests in pushing the issue to the top of the agenda.

HA'ARETZ military affairs commentator Ze'ev Schiff said at the seminar that by pressing on the nuclear issue, Egypt's objective is to slow down the normalization process between Israel and the Arab world.

"Willingly or not, as a result of the peace process, Israel has been sucked into Arab politics," Schiff observed. "It signed a peace agreement with Jordan and is forging ties with Morocco, Oman, Tunisia, Qatar and other countries. Egypt is fearful that its hegemony is threatened, so it is deliberately overburdening the peace process with the nuclear issue."

In addition, Schiff asserts, Egypt aspires to nullify Israel's qualitative edge in weapons systems, its only strategic advantage. This observation goes to the heart of the issue as far as Israel is concerned. Does the peace process require a reassessment and change in Israel's national security policy, and should the nuclear issue be part of a new equation?

However, Cairo would not necessarily benefit if it forced Israel to adopt an explicit nuclear policy, since that would inevitably lead to militant tendencies in the Arab world.

Egypt could, however, be implicitly serving U.S. interests by raising the nuclear issue. Egypt's greatest fear is a nuclear Iran and Iraq, an apprehension shared by the U.S. But Egypt cannot say so publicly, and the U.S. does not want to pressure Israel but will be perceived as biased if it lets Israel off the NPT hook. So Egypt is serving as Washington's proxy.

There is a common interest in preventing the Middle East from "going nuclear," Israeli officials now realize, because the stability inherent in the Cold War-era nuclear balance cannot be replicated in the region. This realization may ultimately convince Israel to reassess its nuclear policy.

Poll Shows 71% Opposed to NPT's Signing

TA2402094495 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 24 Feb 95 p 1

[Public opinion poll conducted by the Dahaf Institute directed by Dr. Mina Tzemah]

[FBIS Translated Text] Question: Should Israel comply with Egypt's demand to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT] or not?

It should—23 percent
It should not—71 percent
Did not reply—6 percent

Question: Was the easing of the closure on Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza this week a right step or a wrong one?

Right step—49 percent
Wrong step—48 percent
Did not reply—3 percent

The poll was conducted on 21 and 22 February on 501 respondents who constitute a representative sample of Israel's adult population. The maximum margin of error is 4 percent.

Peres on 'Janin First,' Syria, Netzarim Evacuation

TA2402104595 Tel Aviv DAVAR in Hebrew 24 Feb 95 p 9

[Report by Moti Bassok]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres intends to raise the issue of Netzarim when the cabinet or inner cabinet next convenes over the next few days. Peres supports the evacuation of Netzarim.

Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin is opposed to dismantling settlements during the interim period in order to avoid establishing any precedents prior to negotiations on the permanent arrangement. The foreign minister yesterday said that he intends to bring the issue of Netzarim up for discussion in the near future. Peres visited the Gaza Strip this week and grew even more convinced that the settlement should be dismantled. The reserve soldiers serving in the Qatif Bloc and even some settlers share this view. There are three settlements that are causes for concern: Netzarim; the Jewish settlement in Hebron; and another settlement that Peres refused to name. He

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plans to hold a debate on the Netzarim issue very soon and may also raise the issue of the other problematic settlements. Yesterday, Peres said: "We will try to establish a dialogue. I do not wish to flex muscles or intensify disagreements. I am not looking for headlines. We have to make progress with regard to the big picture before moving on to the next stage in implementing the agreements with the Palestinians in Judaea and Samaria."

Foreign Minister Peres said that talks with the Palestinians on "Janin First" are continuing. It was he who initiated the idea of "Janin First." The Palestinians asked Israel to grant them responsibility for other fields in the West Bank after they had been granted authority over five fields several months ago. The Palestinians are now asking to be given responsibility for economic and municipal issues. Israel offered them Janin. The Palestinians said: "Give us Janin, along with several other towns." Israel has rejected this request.

As for the Syrian track, Peres said that two theories are currently in vogue to explain Damascus' behavior. One theory is that al-Asad has concluded that the Labor government has reached the end of its road and that there is no point in doing business with it. The second theory is that Syria has always adopted a cautious approach to international developments, only to suddenly make progress. According to this theory, progress may be made in the middle of 1995. Peres said he has no intention of dealing with either of these theories. He reiterated that there has been no breakthrough in Damascus on the issue of peace with Israel. [passage omitted]

'Senior' Source on 'Terrorism,' CIS Espionage

TA2402093195 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 24 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A senior defense establishment source said that a continuation of the deadlock in the political process would encourage terrorists to carry out attacks in order to make the deadlock permanent. The senior source said that assessments regarding the future are not optimistic. Our Army affairs Karmela Menashe reports:

Ever since the Bet Lid terrorist attack on 22 January, the Palestinians have become more effective at foiling terrorist activity. The Palestinians have the ability to stop such activity; however, it remains unclear whether they have received instructions or have the motivation to do so. Nevertheless, assessments with regard to the scope of terrorism in the future are not optimistic. A senior security source said that this issue depends to a great extent on the Palestinian Authority's [PA] ability to prevent such incidents.

If the political deadlock continues, terrorists will be encouraged to carry out attacks in order to perpetuate the standstill. Since 1991, the source said, seven serious terrorist attacks have taken place abroad. The Iranians were clearly intent on acting against Israeli targets abroad, more and more interest was being shown in Israeli and Jewish targets in third world countries, and there has been a clear shift toward suicide attacks to amplify their impact. There are no fool-proof answer to these problems. The source disclosed that the security forces are constantly in search of new security technologies and that the Shin Bet has set up a special team to deal with the matter and adopted a more dynamic and offensive concept of security.

Since the beginning of the intifadah, 276 Israelis have been killed as a result of terrorist operations. In 1994, 69 Israelis were killed. This was the highest number of Israeli fatalities in a single year since the start of the intifadah.

As for the Israeli Arab sector and the Israeli Islamic Movement, the source noted that between 1988 and 1990, there was a period of political unrest and protest among Israeli Arabs. The situation has quieted down since 1992 due to the political process. The Islamic Movement has become a major factor.

The security source asserted that the threat to Jewish settlers in the territories has led to an increase in the scope of extremist activity there. The source explained that the terrorist attack committed by Barukh Goldstein [the Cave of Patriarchs massacre in February 1994] was an extreme expression of the Jewish radicals' feelings of helplessness. The source said that the Shin Bet has never viewed the entire population of Judaea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip as a target for surveillance." [passage omitted]

[Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew on 24 February publishes on pages A1 and A2 a related report by Ze'ev Schiff which adds that the senior source said that "the two bombings in London near the Israeli Embassy and the Jewish Agency offices were apparently the work of Palestinians." The source noted that "foreign police forces and intelligence agencies are prepared to cooperate with the Shin Bet in the war against terrorism. Nevertheless, occasionally there are difficulties in implementing agreements in the field." The report says that "the prevailing assessment is that Israel should expect the most serious terrorist attacks to be perpetrated by the radical Islamic groups. Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] has become the leading movement in terrorist activities. In 1991, Hamas and Islamic Jihad activists made up 21 percent of suspects interrogated by the Shin Bet in connection with terrorist involvement. By 1994, the members of these organizations comprised 56 percent of terrorist suspects. At the same time, the number of Fatah suspects, formerly the leading terrorist organization, dropped to 11 percent." The report notes that "some members of Hamas' military arm were trained in Pakistan and Jordan in 1992 and 1993. These Hamas activists then infiltrated the territories and today are mainly concentrated in the West Bank. Another difficulty in fighting these terrorist groups lies in the fact that they have turned the areas vacated by the Israeli

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army into sanctuaries. In the Gaza Strip and Jericho, Hamas is free to recruit and train new members with hardly any interference from the PA."

[The report goes on to add that the security source asserted that the "large immigration wave from the CIS has necessitated wide-scale counterintelligence activities. Dozens of spies have been captured. Three people have been convicted of espionage and sentenced to long prison terms."]

Police Plan To Defend Population Against 'Terrorism'

TA2302175895 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 23 Feb 95 p 6

[Report by Doron Me'iri]

[FBIS Translated Text] The police have recently prepared an innovative plan to defend towns and settlements all over the country against terrorist attacks.

The plan was presented to the political echelon last week for its perusal and comments. The main points are the establishment of a large and well trained police force to patrol and safeguard residential buildings, institutions, recreation areas, and population centers. On the other hand, guard duty at schools has been canceled.

The new plan calls for at least doubling the number of police vans and manning each patrol van with two policemen.

The plan's initiator is Police Chief Asaf Hefetz, who set up and was the first to command the special antiterror unit. Hefetz believes the new plan will significantly raise the level of personal security for Israelis and will strengthen the police.

In experiments and exercises held over recent months it became clear that the new plan significantly improves the speed of the police reaction.

Within the plan's framework, the police chief suggests canceling school guard duty "which wastes a great deal of money and is not sufficiently efficient." He suggests transferring budgets to the police and local councils "because these are the bodies responsible for public safety and schools."

Safeguarding schools is currently the responsibility of the Education Ministry and is carried out by private firms. According to Commander Hefetz, the present system provides pinpointed and insufficient safeguarding while totally neglecting other sensitive population concentrations, such as kindergartens, residential buildings, malls, cinemas, and places of recreation.

In Hefetz' opinion, a policy of "assuring the security of every object" helps the terrorist organizations to succeed because it is not possibile to station a soldier or a guard at each site. Therefore, the area is in fact unprotected.

"This system can be effective against stabbings," the police chief said, "but it does not provide the appropriate answer to a Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] armed squad. It has a psychological effect, but operationally it is almost worthless."

Nevertheless, the police chief recommends continuing to operate at the present levels for protection at schools in Jerusalem and in population centers along the border.

Defense Ministry Director General Interviewed

TA2302173195 Tel Aviv DAVAR in Hebrew 17 Feb 95 pp 15, 16

[Interview with David 'Ivri, director general of the Defense Ministry, by On Levi; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Levi] Where do we stand today in terms of the arms control talks?

['Ivri] Some very significant resolutions in the area of confidence building were adopted in the meeting in Tunis a few weeks ago. Among other things, it was decided to hold a naval exercise off Tunisia's coast. The purpose of the exercise, to be sponsored by Canada, is to show that countries in the region can cooperate during an incident at sea. It will be a combined exercise of naval and aerial forces. The first coordinating meeting was held last month with the participation of officers from 14 countries. The exercise will be held in March with the participation of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain, Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco.

At the same time it was decided to establish regional security centers. The main office will be in Jordan and two others in Tunis and Qatar. These centers will handle information to prevent undesirable and unplanned conflicts. For example, if an incident occurs in a certain place but the movement of forces is known in advance, this would prevent unplanned tension in the region. The first meeting on this topic will be held in April. The centers will be briefed in advance about the large exercises held by various countries and will be given general information on national budgets.

At present we are working on a document containing a declaration of intent for peace. The work has still not been completed, mainly because of Egypt's demand that Israel submit a report on its nuclear arsenal.

One issue already being implemented is the establishment of communications centers. One center has already been established in the Hague and will be used temporarily to relay messages on arms control and regional security. Six countries are already participating the center: Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, and the Palestinians.

[Levi] Are the talks being held in a good atmosphere?

['Ivri] Sometimes there are conflicts, such as the recent one on the nuclear weapons issue, but generally speaking the atmosphere is very satisfactory. Some countries, such

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as Saudi Arabia, in principle avoid contacts with us. Nevertheless, in Tunis we had better relations with the Saudis than we had in the Qatar meeting. There are more and more contacts and personal acquaintances being forged.

[Levi] To what extent does the situation meet your early expectations?

['Ivri] Some people on the Arab side claim we are advancing too quickly. I would have liked the confidence building to have proceeded at an even faster rate.

[Levi] What is your answer to Egypt's demand that Israel sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT]?

['Ivri] We will not sign the NPT as long as there is no peace in the Middle East and as long as we face threats, and not merely of a nuclear nature. Iran, for example, threatens us every day from the Lebanese border. It is impossible to deal with demilitarization issues as long as real peace is not achieved. For example, when the entire region is demilitarized of chemical weapons we will be able to actively participate in the demilitarization issue. We must not reveal our capabilities even to countries with which we are at peace.

[Levi] What is your assessment of the Iranian and Iraqi threat?

['Ivri] The Iranian threat starts out with the government's statements that there is no room for Israel in the Middle East and that it must be destroyed. Iran is purchasing a lot of weapons, including long-range jet fighters and surface-to-surface missiles which have longer ranges than required for a war against its neighbors—which can reach Israel, as a matter of fact. In addition, we can see a serious Iranian effort in the nuclear area and in the nonconventional weapons sphere—including technological and scientific infrastructure for nuclear installations. The Iranian threat is not immediate, but if we do not prepare now we may find ourselves with insufficient answers over the medium and long terms.

We are preparin uimitations and at the same time carrying out efforts in the international arena in a bid to prevent Iran from obtaining technology and expertise. The commercial interests of some countries enables Iran to further its nuclear efforts.

[Levi] Does Israel have an answer to the Iranian and Iraqi threat?

['Ivri] I cannot give you an unequivocal answer to this question. We have a lot of answers, but in my opinion they do not cover every possible scenario, because in some cases you cannot provide 100 percent security. Had the defense budget been larger, we could have provided better answers. At the moment we are operating under serious budgetary constraints.

[Levi] Does this stem from the fact that the Defense Ministry is finding it hard to confront the Treasury in an era of peace?

['Ivri] Had we been in an era of peace our situation would have been completely different, but even neighbors which are negotiating with us, such as Syria, have not stopped the arms race. The Middle East is still one of the best clients for conventional and nonconventional weapons. It is no accident that some countries want to rehabilitate Iraq—it is an excellent market. As long as we face threats such as surface-to-surface missiles, which are independent of joint borders with Israel, the defense establishment needs a lot of money.

The peace process is also very costly: surrounding the Gaza Strip with a fence and relocating army camps in the West Bank are costly affairs. The move to peace is very expensive, and somebody must foot the bill. We also must be powerful enough to prevent any of the region's countries from succumbing to the temptation of stopping the peace process.

[Levi] Is the Treasury fulfilling its commitments to the Defense Ministry?

['Ivri] Every side believes it is abiding by its commitments. There is, however, a very serious confrontation between the Treasury and the defense establishment, because the conflict between them is of a structural nature. Since the peace process has beguan the public tends to prefer economics to security. The Treasury is taking advantage of this, and from its viewpoint it is correct, because it wants to contribute more to the public's living conditions and to the civilian business sector than to security. We believe the defense establishment must remain highly alert and preserve Israel's might.

[Levi] It appears that your contacts with the Americans are easier than those with the Treasury.

['Ivri] Generally speaking, it is easier for us to explain Israel's strategic and security situation to many of the Americans with whom we work than to the Israeli Treasury.

[Levi] Don't the Americans ask why they should preserve the aid level when in Israel itself the defense budget is being slashed?

['Ivri] The question occasionally crops up. Since, however, Israel's defense budget has remained stable over the last four to five years, this is not a serious argument. American sensitivity is directed in other directions, for example, to the use of U.S. weapons for quelling the intifadah.

Last September we received a U.S. guarantee that the aid level would be preserved until the end of 1996. Due to the 1996 elections, however, they cannot discuss any budgets beyond that year with us.

[Levi] What will be the cost of implementing the second stage of the interim agreement with the Palestinians?

['Ivri] I still do not know, because we do not have detailed and approved plans yet. There are various assessments, starting with one billion shekels.

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[Levi] How is the Arrow project doing?

['Ivri] We have completed a series of successful tests and another test is scheduled for the near future. The present delays are not caused by the missile itself, rather by logistical issues. The main problem with the Arrow is budgetary. For this reason we are doing the essential minimum rather than the maximum possible.

[Levi] How do the Americans regard the continuation of the project?

['Ivri] During his last visit here, Secretary of Defense William Perry said the project is doing much better than he believed and expected. He would have been very happy had we advanced more quickly. Nobody regards the Arrow as a substitute for American systems, but everybody regards it as a much more sophisticated system which will be able to provide a solution to certain threats.

Today the United States finances 72 percent of the Arrow-2 and is involved in some the Arrow technologies. We are paying for the radar development, although I have recently spoken with John Deutsch, the U.S. undersecretary of defense, and he agreed to pay between $30 to $40 million annually over the next five years for other elements of the project.

[Levi] Assuming this aid is forthcoming, when do you envision the completion of the entire system?

['Ivri] I believe the project will be completed in 1997 or 1998. The project management is now carrying out staff work toward presenting the timetable for the continuation of the project, assuming we will receive U.S. aid. When the work is completed it will be submitted to the prime minister and only then to the Americans. If the plan is approved we will be able to move ahead. [passage omitted]

Gen. Yifrah Named Chief of Military Intelligence

TA2402082995 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 24 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Brigadier Hayim Yifrah has been appointed as the new IDF [Israel Defense Forces] chief of military intelligence. He takes over from Brigadier Doron Tamir who is retiring after 27 years of service. Yifrah, who is 51, has served in a number of positions in the IDF intelligence unit, most recently as the military attache in Paris.

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'Source': U.S. Aid Continues Despite 'Republican Era'

JN2302175795 Amman AKHBAR AL-USBU' in Arabic 23 Feb 95 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman—AKHBAR AL-USBU'—An official Jordanian source has said the United States has assured the Jordanian Government that its economic aid to Jordan will continue in the Republican era and that it will not be affected by the nonexistence of a Democratic majority at U.S. Congress.

The source said U.S. policy is institutionalized policy that is not affected by changing administrations. He said Washington's military aid to Jordan has risen from $7 million last year to over $35 million in 1995. This is in addition to the aid and grants not listed in the foreign aid program, but in other sections of the U.S. budget.

The source added that the increased military aid to Jordan is a positive indication of the intentions of the U.S. Administration and the U.S. Congress, which approved this increase.

The source said U.S. aid to Jordan will be less than Jordanian requests. Jordan expected to receive billions of dollars after the peace process, following the example of Egypt, which receives U.S. aid in annual grants amounting to $2.4 billion. Both Democratic and Republican administrations have been committed to aiding Egypt throughout the past years, without any change.

The source said a U.S. Congressional delegation will arrive in Amman to assure the Jordanian Government that Congress will not obstruct the agreement to write off U.S. debt to Jordan, and that this agreement will be implemented, although in two stages. However, the source said, Jordan can consider its debt to Washington practically written off.

The source added that U.S. Congress will consider these debts part of the U.S. aid intended to be extended to Jordan and will be deducted from that aid. This is the point of disagreement between the Republicans and the Democrats. The Democrats do not want to deduct the debts from the new scheduled aid to Jordan.

PA Representative: Jerusalem Dispute Settled

JN2302183295 Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 17 Feb 95 pp 32-35

[Interview with 'Umar al-Khatib, PA representative in Jordan, by unidentified correspondent in Amman; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Correspondent] How do you assess the results of President Yasir 'Arafat's recent visit to Jordan? It is said he was not satisfied, despite the fact that the visit had been postponed several times.

[Al-Khatib] First of all, I would like to stress that the atmosphere between President 'Arafat and his majesty the king was very cordial and warm. His majesty visited the president at the guest palace, and then they had talks. What is said about 'Arafat not being satisfied is not true. The long awaited visit was postponed either because one of the two leaders was busy or because they wanted good preparations for the visit.

[Correspondent] So there are no obstacles or problems?

[Al-Khatib] There have never been any obstacles. The evidence is that six agreements organizing relations between the two countries were signed on the day President 'Arafat arrived in Amman. Believe me, President 'Arafat was very satisfied. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] The latest information available to us confirms that the Jordanian-Palestinian dispute over the religious jurisdiction over the holy sites has not been settled yet. During President 'Arafat's visit to Amman, nothing was said about this issue. What is the truth?

[Al-Khatib] There is no dispute between the Palestinian National Authority and Jordan over Jerusalem.

[Correspondent] But we have not heard a conclusive statement about this issue from any other Palestinian official.

[Al-Khatib] Let me tell you something. Jerusalem, according to Israeli laws, was annexed to Israel by a decision of the Knesset, because it is, as they claim, part of the Hebrew state. Therefore, if Jordan disengages its ties with the holy sites in Jerusalem and abandons the maintenance and guardianship over the holy sites, then this will create a vacuum that enables the Israeli authorities to treat the Islamic and Christian awqaf the same way it treats Haifa and Yafo, for example. The Israeli Ministry of Religions would then assume responsibility for the holy sites.

[Correspondent] This confirms that the dispute is over.

[Al-Khatib] We have asked Jordan to continue to supervise the holy sites until the National Authority assumes government in the final phase and Jerusalem is restored as the capital of the state of Palestine. Then, the Jordanian authorities will hand over the holy sites to the Palestinian Authority [PA]. [passage omitted]

Statement Welcomes Mediation Between Qatar, Bahrain

JN2302193395 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 23 Feb 95

["Text" of statement issued by the government on the "border dispute" between Qatar and Bahrain; date not given—read by announcer]

[FBIS Translated Text] Since the International Court of Justice issued its ruling last Wednesday that it was

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qualified to consider the border dispute between the fraternal states of Bahrain and Qatar, the Jordanian Government has been following with great interest recent developments related to the resumption of the mediation efforts and the good offices of the fraternal Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to settle the border dispute by brotherly means and within and through the Arab house in order to bolster brotherly ties, achieve the interests of both sides, and enhance joint Arab action.

While it expresses its welcome of, appreciation for, and satisfaction with these good efforts to settle the dispute through dialogue and negotiations, which Jordan has always advocated as the best way to settle differences and disputes among the brothers, the Jordanian Government hopes that the two countries will provide every guarantee for the success of this good mediation and these efforts to reach a final solution to this problem for the benefit of the two fraternal countries and the whole Arab nation.

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Rabin Visits Border Areas in South, Comments

NC2302174095 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 1430 GMT 23 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin visited the border area this morning. Accompanying the prime minister were members of his cabinet; Uri Lubrani, coordinator of the Lebanese affairs; the Israeli chief of staff; the commander of the northern zone, and several ranking army officers. They were welcomed by staff Major General Antoine Lahd, commander of the South Lebanese Army [SLA]. [passage omitted]

In an exclusive statement to our correspondent, the Israeli prime minister said: The main objective of our visit today is to reiterate our cooperation with Maj. Gen. Lahd and the SLA and to convey our solidarity with the civilians as part of the desired peace and to fight those trying to undermine peace. The Israeli prime minister said that Israel is keen on preserving Lebanon's independence and sovereignty.

To a question on Lebanon's insistence on implementing Resolution 425 first and then talking about the peace conditions and linking peace with Syria, Rabin said that Syria is the one that obstructs the peace negotiations. But Lebanon does not have the freedom to hold separate negotiations with Israel. He added: I am fully convinced that had the Lebanese Government embarked on the initiative to work out peace with Israel on the basis of purely Lebanese considerations, we would have achieved peace long ago, we would have avoided a situation like the one we are facing now, and Lebanon would have been able to make progress on all domains.

Continuing, Rabin said that Israel does not and cannot dictate peace to others. Nor does it accept peace conditions dictated to it, because peace should emanate from the two sides' desire and acceptance. Israel achieved peace with Egypt and Jordan and wants to achieve peace with Syria and Lebanon, but separately as independent and sovereign states. We do not want to negotiate peace with Lebanon through any other country.

Maj. Gen. Lahd held a news conference. He answered the questions put forth by the Israeli correspondents who came to cover Rabin's visit to the border area. Maj. Gen. Lahd's answers could be summed up as follows:

1. We are fighting all enemies of peace led by Hizballah and the Palestinian organizations who are financed by Iran and sponsored by Syria;

2. If we stop our resistance of the peace enemies in this region, the battle will move to northern Israel;

3. We are advocates of security and peace. And since Israel is a peace seeker it must continue to support us until we achieve this goal;

4. The Lebanese Government should not be allowed to talk about peace, because everyone knows that it is Syria thAT is running the show;

5. Israel has set conditions for peace with Lebanon. These conditions include the guarantee of the future of the border area inhabitants and the SLA troops. I would like to say that this matter should be guaranteed by either American or other international assurances to ensure that they will be implemented. As a Lebanese citizen, I concur with Israel's policy not to attack villages and civilians. But there is a previous agreement that Israel should not be attacked by Katyusha rockets. But these rockets are still being fired at the border villages. I do NOT accept this.

The area and northern Israel are one zone. We both work for the sake of mutual security and interests. Security in northern Israel cannot be guaranteed without being guaranteed in this area;

6. The SLA has not withdrawn from Tallusah nor has it been defeated by Hizballah there, as they claim. The SLA is stronger now than any time before. But we had to remove the post due to specific military considerations, but it's still in Tallusah; and

7. We maintain A humanitarian policy toward the al-Khiyam prison. We wish that Hizballah would reciprocate. But Hizballah has no ethical values. We will continue our policy and allow the families of the detainees to visit their sons. [passage omitted]

Al-Hariri: Israeli Moves 'Way of Avoiding' Peace Demands

NC2402133895 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1130 GMT 24 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri says he believes that today we need an education policy formulated by broad national discussion. He said dialogue is our real weapon now and in future because our persistence regarding peace will ensure that we do not submit to the Israeli pressures, the objective of which is to hamper our current role. He also believes the Israeli blows are a way of avoiding the responsibilities and requirements of peace. They affect this march negatively. Prime Minister al-Hariri said these blows will not change our commitment toward the parallel nature of the Lebanese and Syrian tracks of the negotiations. On the contrary, they increase our insistence on this stance by relying on our unity and democracy. Prime Minister al-Hariri delivered his speech before the inauguration of the fourth conference of Sayyidat al-Luwayzah University this morning under the headline "Education in Lebanon: School, University, and Vocational Teaching." The inauguration was attended by ministers and experts.

Labor Minister Threatens Attacks on Israeli Cities

NC2302174495 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1715 GMT 23 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Labor Minister 'Abdallah al-Amin today said in Sidon that the Lebanese army is the

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spearhead of the Resistance and that it will return the Israeli attacks and tighten inspection measures at crossings leading to the border area.

Al-Amin said that Lebanon is a resisting rather than a neutral state. If the Israeli bombardment reaches the cities and villages, we will bombard the Israeli cities and villages, he said; adding that the government will take the responsibility.

Al-Amin added that the Council of Ministers will discuss a freeze on contacts with the United States through the security committee and others at its coming session. He said that Lebanon refuses to resume negotiations under the threat of terrorism and blockade.

Al-Amin said that the Israeli aggression on Lebanon is urged and protected by America.

Hizballah Chief Threatens To Attack Israeli Settlements

NC2402111895 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1045 GMT 24 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] At a celebration organized by Hizballah in Beirut's Southern Suburb, Hizballah Secretary General Hasan Nasrallah threatened to bombard Israeli settlements if Lebanese villages are shelled. He said: The Islamic Resistance still reserves its right to attack the Jewish colonies in northern Palestine when Lebanese civilians are subjected to shelling, killing, and destruction. Nasrallah added: We will exercise this right when we want, not when Israel wants to drag us into a battle.

Official Meets U.S., Russian Envoys on South Situation

NC2402124595 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1130 GMT 24 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Foreign Ministry has summoned the heads of the diplomatic missions of the five major states to urge their governments to intervene to end the Israeli aggression and the two-week naval blockade imposed on Tyre, which extended to Sidon yesterday.

In this regard, Foreign Ministry Secretary General Ambassador Zafir al-Hasan today met U.S. Charge d'Affaires Ron Schlicher, who said after the meeting that the discussion dealt with several issues, including the security dialogue held in Washington two weeks ago, the situation in the south, and the need for everybody to ease the tension and adopt restraint.

Asked about Lebanon's call to back its position at the Security Council, Schlicher said that [Lebanese Ambassador to Washington] Riyad Tabbarah will hold contacts with senior officials in the U.S. Administration and that it is better to wait to see the results.

Later Ambassador al-Hasan met Russian Ambassador Gennadiy Ilichev, who denied that Ambassador al-Hasan sought Russia's support for filing a complaint at the Security Council against Israel. Ambassador Ilichev pointed out that Ambassador al-Hasan discussed in detail the situation in the south. He promised to relay what he heard to his government.

Iranian Official Denies Visit Linked to Israeli Prisoner

NC2402063995 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 24 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Mohammad Kazem Khonsari, director general of the Iranian Foreign Ministry in charge of the Middle East and Africa, has reiterated Iran's support for Lebanon. Khonsari, accompanied by 'Abbas Shokuhi, director of the Middle East Desk at the Iranian Foreign Ministry, and Iranian Ambassador Homayun 'Alizadeh visited President al-Hirawi yesterday. The Iranian delegation later visited Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri and stressed that the alliance between Iran and Lebanon serves the interests of both countries.

Khonsari denied that his visit to Lebanon has anything to do with a report published in a German paper regarding the Lebanese detainees in Israeli prisons or the release of Israeli pilot Ron Arad.

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Al-Ahmar Demands 'Complete' Israeli Withdrawal

JN2302174395 Damascus SANA in Arabic 1630 GMT 23 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, 23 Feb (SANA)—Comrade 'Abdallah al-Ahmar, assistant secretary general of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, at noon today received a delegation of the al-Jinan Society in Tripoli, Lebanon led by Dr. Muna Haddad.

The talks addressed the ties of coordination and cooperation between the two fraternal peoples in Syria and Lebanon, the ceaseless efforts to promote the ties of blood and kinship between the two peoples, as well as common interests.

The talks also addressed the joint struggle being waged by the two countries' peoples to achieve just and comprehensive peace on the basis of UN Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, and 425, a peace that would ensure complete Israeli withdrawal from the Golan up to the 4 June 1967 borders, and also from southern Lebanon.

Israeli 'Aggressions' Viewed; U.S. 'Pressure' Urged

JN2402113695 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 24 Feb 95

[From the "Press Review"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In today's commentary, the newspaper AL-BA'TH writes about the continuous Israeli aggressions against Lebanon. It says: It is clear that Israel was not satisfied with heightening tension, carrying out aggressions, killing innocent civilians, destroying houses, and burning crops, but it expanded the circle of its aggression by imposing a maritime siege on Lebanon's southern coast.

The paper notes: Lebanese officials believe that the objective of this Israeli military pressure on Lebanon is to force Lebanon to join those who have signed agreements with Israel, through which they have lost everything.

Al-BA'TH says: Lebanon, as its officials say, will never submit to Israeli pressure. The Lebanese are now more prepared than ever to make sacrifices and face challenges. At the same time, they are advocates and seekers of peace. They believe that the solution is within reach, for Israel has no choice now other than implementing Resolution 425 and withdrawing from the occupied part of Lebanon.

The paper says: Lebanon has proven, in word and deed, that the pressures on it are all to no avail, and that Israel realizes this established fact.

Concluding its commentary, AL-BA'TH says: Lebanon seeks to achieve a just and comprehensive peace. It still stresses that security and stability will not prevail in the region unless Israel implements Resolution 425, and that the repeated aggressions, which target everything in the south, will only bolster the steadfastness of the Lebanese people in general, and southern Lebanon in particular, and strengthen their determination to make sacrifices and to face challenges.

In one of its commentaries, the newspaper AL-THAWRAH writes on the tour Dennis Ross, special coordinator of the peace process, will make to the region within the next few days.

The paper says: The situation is escalating and becoming more tense after the Rabin government, just like the previous government, has blocked all the paths leading to peace, and exhausted the political process by intransigent stands and premeditated attempts to abort all prospects for peace and the conditions of its establishment.

AL-THAWRAH adds: Washington's initiative, the peace-for-land formula, and the efforts of its high-ranking diplomats, have been expropriated and drained of any essence. All this has failed to change anything in the existing situation, or to make Tel Aviv abandon its intransigence and adherence to occupation and expansion. On the contrary, it has drowned in the quagmire of intransigence and negativism.

The paper notes: Israel's new leaders, just like the old ones, have changed the Madrid term of reference into peace-for-peace, and exchanged it with partial and separate deals instead of a comprehensive solution. They even insist on peddling them.

The paper says: The onslaught of settlement, Judaization, the confiscation of lands, and the subjugation of the Palestinian people to siege, starvation, killing, and torture operations; the aggressive military escalation against Lebanon and its south; and the declared Labor and Likud leaders' rejection of the principle of full withdrawal from the Golan and southern Lebanon and the termination of the occupation of Jerusalem; in addition to refusing to join the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, are all serious signs that pose serious threats to peace, and check the possibility of the success of any U.S. action to stop the existing collapse and find a way out of the current impasse.

Concluding its commentary, AL-THAWRAH says: Syria has welcomed and still welcomes the U.S. efforts. Washington and the whole world has admitted that Syria has spared no effort to make the peace process succeed and achieve its aspired objective. Syria stresses its national and pan-Arab constants regarding any solution, and its adherence to the Madrid conference's terms of reference and the UN Security Council resolutions.

In another commentary, the paper says: Following the repeated negative Israeli stands and the Arab, particularly the Syrian, response to the requirements of a true peace, all sides now know that Israel is the one standing against peace, obstructing all efforts, and using all means of delusion and maneuvering to evade peace.

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AL-THAWRAH believes that this stalemate will last for a long time, as long as the U.S. stand is still far from exerting any pressure on Israel to remove this obstruction, and as long as America is still far from commitment to the stand of the honest and full partner in the talks.

The paper says: Had Israel felt that there was a serious U.S. stand, it would not have heard the daily U.S. calls, by senior U.S. officials, urging it not to withdraw from the Golan or to respond to the peace requirements.

Concluding, AL-THAWRAH says: If actual pressure is not exerted on Israel to force it to accept the peace requirements, peace will continue to be unattainable.

U.S., Russian Action Urged To Save Peace Process

JN2302165095 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1240 GMT 23 Feb 95

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: Israeli officials describe all those opposed to their intransigence and arrogance as enemies of peace, or hold them responsible for the failure to achieve peace. Israeli officials have not hesitated to do so, although it is they who are tightening the siege of the occupied Palestinian territories and deploying joint Israeli soldier-settler patrols to make it clear to all that the occupation troops protect the terrorism perpetrated by settlers. A week ago, Israel authorized a demonstration by extremists to mark the first anniversary of the death of Baruch Goldstein, the butcher of the holy Hebron Mosque massacre.

Israel was not content with this terrorism. It is instigating the self-rule authority to carry out further acts of repression against the Palestinian Arab people in implementation of the Oslo accord. Yitzhaq Rabin has continued to ask the self-rule authority about what it has done to repress the Palestinians opposed to the Gaza-Jericho accord.

By its terrorism and siege, Israel is poisoning the life of the Palestinian Arab people. Similarly, it is carrying out criminal acts against the fraternal Lebanese people, as manifested in the stepped-up air bombardment and artillery shelling, which augurs ill for a serious expansion of the aggression.

Israel is engaged in this repression and terrorism in both the Palestinian and Lebanese territories on the pretext of safeguarding Israeli security. This is the same awkward excuse Israel has used to justify its refusal to sign the Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT] as well as its quest to acquire further sophisticated weapons, although its military arsenal is crammed with weapons. These Israeli practices are reminiscent of a statement Yitzhaq Rabin made a few days ago, provoking the entire world community, when he said that Israel must brace itself for more wars. We, just like others, cannot fail to establish a link between this Israeli saber rattling and another statement by Yitzhaq Rabin, in which he consecrated Israel's obstruction of the peace process on the Syrian track of negotiations. In the latter statement, Rabin said he does not expect accomplishments on this track of negotiations, because Israel will be busy with its parliamentary elections.

While making such statements, Israeli officials have overlooked the fact that it was they who deviated from the course of the peace process, violated its terms of reference, failed to subscribe to the territory-for-peace exchange, and defied the Madrid formula. It is they who have refused to subscribe to the relevant UN Security Council resolutions, which provide for complete Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories to the 4 June 1967 borders.

Given this long record of obstructionism, Israel, which is threatening the peace process with collapse, is still wondering about the intentions of Syria, even though the world community and its influential members have testified that peace for it is a strategic option, that it has facilitated the launching of the peace process, and that it is only seeking the peace that is enshrined in the relevant international resolutions. Israel, which is making such queries, if it actually seeks peace, must withdraw from all occupied Arab territories, halt its efforts to stockpile mass destruction weapons in its arsenals, and sign the NPT, instead of refusing to sign the treaty and accusing other parties that have already signed it, such as Iran, of seeking to acquire a nuclear capability. This is better than submitting ridiculous proposals in this regard, such as arguing that it will sign the NPT two years after the achievement of peace in the Middle East. This is an ominous situation in the Middle East region. This situation must prompt the entire world community, and the U.S. and Russian cosponsors of the peace process in particular, to act to ensure the implementation of the relevant international resolutions, which would put an end to blackmail, aggression, ambitions, and the endeavors to dominate and plunder others' territory. Otherwise, the prospects of the peace process will remain uncertain.

Al-Ahmar Meets Moroccan Official, Stresses Peace

JN2302161695 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1215 GMT 23 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Comrade 'Abdallah al-Ahmar, assistant secretary general of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, this morning received Mohamed El Yazghi, deputy first secretary of the Moroccan Socialist Union of Popular Forces.

The talks addressed the ties of cooperation between the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party and the Moroccan Socialist Union of Popular Forces, and the importance of promoting them to contribute to enhancing the Arab nation's struggle to meet the challenges posed by the current stage.

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The talks touched on Arab developments and the efforts of the two parties to address them. The two sides underscored the importance of undertaking serious action to improve the current Arab state of affairs and to rebuild Arab solidarity in a manner that pools the Arab nation's resources to face the Israeli schemes of expansion and domination. They reiterated the importance of enhancing the efforts of Arab parties and organizations to realize the common goals of all Arabs.

The talks also dealt with developments in the peace process. Comrade al—Ahmar reviewed the developments in this regard, saying the importance of the role political forces and parties can play on the pan-Arab scene and in each and every Arab state in enhancing and promoting the masses' awareness so that we may confront Israel's schemes, which aim to split Arab ranks and dominate the region.

Comrade al-Ahmar emphasized that Syria adheres to the constants and principles that constituted the terms of reference of the peace process launched in Madrid. He added that it will continue its efforts to help the peace process achieve a just and comprehensive peace grounded in the implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, and 425, as well as the territory-for-peace exchange. Such peace, he noted, must result in Israeli troop withdrawal from all of the Golan to the 4 June 1967 borders, from southern Lebanon, and from the occupied Palestinian territories. Moreover, such peace must restore the legitimate Arab rights, he maintained.

Columnist Defends Right To Attend Conference

JN2402071595 Damascus TISHRIN in Arabic 31 Jan 95 p 8

["Frankly Speaking" column by 'Imad Nusayrat: "Sorry Madam!!"]

[FBIS Translated Text] I was assigned by my paper to cover the activities of the Conference of Commercial Managers of Arab Airlines and Aviation Organizations which began yesterday at the Meredien Hotel in Damascus. I did not hesitate to go despite the pressure of work. I entered the conference hall and found myself sitting next to an Arab correspondent. Later, I overheard a lady asking the Arab correspondent about my identity.

I intervened and said: I am from the newspaper TISHRIN madam.

She gave a broad smile and said: You will get a full report when the meetings are over. But right now, you are not supposed to attend the meetings of this conference.

I collected my papers and briefcase and sneaked out so as not to disturb the speakers. The mill of questions then started turning in my head searching for logical answers.

Why did the lady bar me from the meetings when she allowed other Arab correspondents to attend?

Is it conceivable to bar local papers from conferences in Damascus when Arab papers are allowed to attend? What I know is that we can attend any activity at any government level without hesitation or fear.

Besides, how can this lady address me in this way and tell me that she will send someone with a full report? Does she think I am the representative of an Arab advertisement firm?

Does she not know that journalism means attending and following up the event, and then analyzing, investigating, concluding, and expressing an opinion?

What the lady demanded falls within the context of announcements, advertisements, and facades. Madam, if this is how you deal with some papers for one reason or another, then let me tell you that our local papers have not reached and will not reach this level.

Many questions turned in my head seeking objective answers, but the most pressing one was: Why was I not supposed to attend the meetings?

Do you have a clear answer, madam?

Paper Advocates Reform in Banking System

JN2402070995 Damascus TISHRIN in Arabic 4 Feb 95 p 8

[From the "Frankly Speaking" column: "The Banking Sector"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Now that the private sector has entered most fields of industry, agriculture, and trade, and scores of firms and plants have been established under the Encouragement of Investment Law No. 10 of 1991, the question posed is: Will our banking system be able to serve these firms under its current system of laws and regulations?

Let us be more frank and say that the system in its present form does not meet our ambitions and cannot render the required services in the manner we wish and desire.

We have several options, but the main ones are:

First: We should redouble our efforts to improve this important sector, which is 100 percent a public sector, so that it can catch up with the progress in world banks.

Second: We should, to a certain limit and within rules, allow the establishment of joint banks with the government at least in the free zones.

If we do not take steps in this direction, we will be jeopardizing the economy, because investors will resort to the black market and shadow markets and deal with Arab and foreign banks instead.

Logic demands that we develop our banking services in line with the increased activity of the private sector and the big expansion in its projects and volume of trade.

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We must not forget also that the private sector depends on flexibility and that procedures, guidelines, and complications must not pose a stumbling block to the expansion of its activity. Let us remember that banks represent the arteries of the economy. They are the vessels through which money runs and any defect in them will cause big problems and losses.

New Price Increase Questioned

JN2302203695 Damascus AL-BA'TH in Arabic 7 Feb 95 p 7

[Article by 'Ali 'Abbud from the "Under the Microscope" column: "Profits and Higher Prices"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The profits made last year by the Aleppo Glass Company from tempered and flat glass exceeded 61 million pounds. The Damascus Glass Company's profits may have also been more or slightly less than this figure, since raw materials are available locally and abundantly.

We are, of course, pleased with these profits, but we are also surprised that they have been accompanied at the beginning of this year by an increase in the prices of the glass products of these two companies. It is if the intention is to make more profits.

We can understand if a company increases the prices of its products as a result of an increase in the prices of imported or local raw materials. We can also understand if a company increases the prices due to the introduction of new products with higher technical specifications, or to an improvement in the specifications of existing products.

But for the glass company to resort to higher prices according to a decision by the minister of industry without the existence of any of these factors calls for many queries and makes us wonder about the mechanisms and standards used to set the prices of local commodities.

What surprises us most is that the Ministry of Industry has increased the prices of glass at a time when the local market is facing an acute shortage of this commodity and causing a controversy between craftsmen and the company management about its marketing operations.

The main question is: If the Aleppo Glass Company has made profits exceeding 61 million pounds, how much profit have the merchants and commission agents made in the black market, especially when we know that this commodity is being sold at double the official price? And, how much profit have these people made on the new prices?

Had the increase in prices coincided with an increase in production to cover the needs of the local market, an improvement in the technical specifications, and the disappearance of the black market in this commodity, this measure would have been received with satisfaction by everyone. But the thing is, the majority of the citizens are currently buying glass at prices that far exceed even the new official price.

Daily Applauds Food Industry Improvements

JN2402072695 Damascus TISHRIN in Arabic 1 Feb 95 p 8

[Article by 'Abd-al-Fattah al-'Awad]

[FBIS Translated Text] Competition has forced our food companies to develop themselves and improve their production. But has this development been sufficient to the point of enabling these companies to succeed in this competition?

One year ago, we spoke on this page about low execution percentages, large stocks, and poor quality. Has the situation changed or is it still as it was? Let us read on:

The State Food Organization's gross production by the end of 1994 reached 3.2 billion Syrian pounds under fixed prices and 4.5 billion pounds under current prices. The organization achieved a reasonable percentage execution of 74 percent under fixed prices and 78 percent under current prices.

Of the 23 companies belonging to the organization, 12 companies achieved a percentage execution of more than 85 percent. But the figures also revealed a fault in the planning when the execution percentages of some companies turned out to be unusually high, such as: 144 percent for Homs Grapes Company, 134 percent for Hamah Vegetable Oil Company, 130 percent for al-Suwayda' Grapes Company, and 143 percent for Barada Beer Company. We wonder about the economic genius that projected low or modest production while the actual results were high. Let us put it this way, we would have been more pleased with the results had they come out according to the projections.

The execution percentages of eight companies were below 50 percent. The lowest figures were: Tartus Peanut Company at 23 percent, Idlib Canned Food Company at 37 percent, and al-Mayadin Company at 45 percent. The officials in charge of these companies attributed the drop in production to power cuts, turnover of manpower, and poor raw materials. Officials at Aleppo Vegetable Oil Company said power cuts totaling 633 hours reduced production by the equivalent of 205 million pounds. This is in addition to the drop in the percentage of oil in seeds, humidity, and wastage due to experimental operations.

The percentage execution in the production of soap also dropped due to the lack of steam, which is essential for this kind of industry, for one whole month. The Damascus Vegetable Oil Company attributed the drop in the percentage execution to the failure of consumer cooperative societies and retail companies to purchase the company's production, which prompted the company to confine its production to new brands of soap.

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In the canned food industry, companies faced shortages of agricultural supplies, especially in the major crops such as peas and apricots. The percentage execution in the processing of peas dropped to 30 percent. This is in addition to insufficient quantities and irregular supplies of tomatoes and the uneconomic prices of other raw materials that go into food processing. For instance, some companies complained about lack of tin sheets for operating canning plants in Damascus and Idlib.

What makes us happy is the Food Organization's success in getting rid of its large stocks. Director General 'Ali Kamil Sulayman said: We finally got rid of the stocks, which were a big burden for a long time. We sold all of the stocks accumulated since 1990. For us, this was a great achievement.

We asked: But you also have other stocks? Sulayman replied: The current stocks do not worry us, since we can sell them at any time. We have quantities of tomato paste, but this is a popular commodity, which is readily marketable. Henceforth, no commodities will be kept until the following year. We can also dispose of the current stocks, which consist of the 1994 production. It is not a problem at all.

Sulayman said that the organization's gross sales amounted to 4.4 billion pounds. He added that the disparity between the high execution percentages of production and the sales is not due to the existence of large stocks but to the production of half-processed liquids in several companies that cannot be sold at the present time. Internal sales reached 4.2 billion pounds, he said.

Asked how successful the organization has been in exports, Sulayman said: We have begun to find our way to world markets. We have exported $6.18 million worth of goods, which is a reasonable figure for us, although the percentage execution was only 42 percent. The organization has also imported $7 million in goods. Thus exports covered 88 percent of the imports, compared to 66 percent last year. I would like to emphasize here that we will do all we can to succeed in exports. We know we can succeed because our production has improved tangibly.

We asked: So, where is a problem? Sulayman replied: The problems lies in short liquidity and weak capital, which has been eroded by inflation, and this is a burden for our companies. There is also the turnover in skilled manpower. We are in a competitive market and we do not have much authority. We hope that Law No. 20 will ensure the authority to enable companies to run themselves more economically and effectively. We also hope to improve our production from the aspects of quality and packing. For example, we already improved the packing of several products making them more desirable.

Finally, we say that compared to 1993, conditions in the organization have improved tangibly. But this improvement has not yet reached the level of our ambitions. There is still the problem of exports and the improvement of products in quality and packing. There is also the issue of old machinery and other problems that do not make us sufficiently optimistic.

Hamah-Based Company To Build New Cement Factory

JN2302204495 Damascus AL-BA'TH in Arabic 5 Feb 95 p 5

[Article by Jihad al-Ahmar]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Hamah—Great efforts are being exerted to increase our cement production in order to meet the increasing demand for this commodity.

The 1994 figures show a real increase in production compared to 1993.

The Syrian Company for the Production of Cement and Building Materials in Hamah was one of the companies of the State Cement Organization to contribute to this increase. Its general manager, whom we met at the company offices in Hamah, told us that the company consists of two factories for the production of "Portland" black cement. The first factory, which began production in 1967, operates according to the wet method with an annual production capacity of 125,000 tonnes. The second factory, which began production in 1977, operates according to the dry method with an annual production capacity of 275,000 tonnes. The company has 955 employees, including 87 administrative staff.

The Production Plan

For several years, the company has been achieving its production plans with good averages. The execution percentages of the 1994 plan in both of the company's factories were as follows:

1. Target production for klinker 411,000 tonnes, and actual production 408,704 tonnes; a percentage execution of 99 percent.

2. Target production for cement 430,000 tonnes, and actual production 442,463 tonnes; a percent execution of 103 percent.

3. Target for packing and deliveries 430,000 tonnes, and actual packing and deliveries 439,997 tonnes; a percentage execution of 102 percent.

The following is the production plan for 1995: Klinker 411,000 tonnes, cement [figure not given], and deliveries 430,000 tonnes. [passage omitted]

The company, in cooperation with the competent authorities, is currently studying the technical terms for building a new factory with an annual production capacity of one million tonnes of cement with the view to expediting the implementation of this project and

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increasing the production of cement in order to meet the needs of the local market and strengthen the economy.

Official Discusses Glass 'Crisis,' Proposals

JN2402074695 Damascus TISHRIN in Arabic 7 Feb 95 p 8

[Article by 'Abd-al-Fattah al-'Awad]

[FBIS Translated Text] We have added glass to the black market list, since the price of one square meter of glass now ranges from 500 to 600 pounds, while its official price is around 200 pounds, even after the recent price increase by the Ministry of Industry.

A crisis exists and there is no use denying it. This crisis has prompted the Ministry of Supply to submit a memo to the cabinet proposing that the Investment Bureau initiate projects for glass production, that the Ministry of Economy permit glass imports, and that the Ministry of Industry permit the building of new glass factories. The proposals are contained in Memo No. 14332 9/3/508 by the Materials Department of the Ministry of Supply.

What are the causes of this crisis, how long will it continue, and what are the solutions? Let us now read the answers that have been provided in a dialogue with Dr. 'Adnan Faris, general manager of the Glass Company:

[Al-'Awad] How do you explain the glass crisis and to what extent has the production process contributed to the creation of this crisis?

[Dr. Faris] The crisis actually begun after the al-Mahjar furnace was closed down for maintenance, which will last five months. We normally do that once every three or four years. This means that we will be facing a glass crisis during maintenance and repair work in the furnace. What has contributed to the crisis is the hoarding of this commodity by merchants, the spreading of false reports that the Aleppo furnaces have also been closed down for maintenance, and the fact that projects under Law No. 10 have increased the demand for glass.

[Al-'Awad] The maintenance is taking place at the glass furnace in al-Mahjar, yet the crisis also included flat glass?

[Dr. Faris] The demand for glass has increased in general and the hoarding has included all types of glass. I would like to mention here that the company as a whole has achieved a percentage execution of 86 percent of its production plan with regard to quantity and 89.5 percent with regard to cost, and this is a very good average.

[Al-'Awad] Does this mean that current production is below our actual needs, which is why we are facing this crisis?

[Dr. Faris] Not at all. Our production exceeds our needs, which is why we are also exporting. We have traditional markets in Lebanon, Jordan, and several Gulf states which, to a certain degree, depend on our exports. There has never been a crisis. This is a temporary one that has occurred under special circumstances. Regarding exports, once we have ensured the local market's needs, we implement our export contracts with our traditional markets in the states I mentioned. Our sales in 1994 reached 478 million pounds. And dollar sales reached $1.3 million.

[Al-'Awad] Do distribution methods and privileges have anything to do with expanding the crisis?

[Dr. Faris] We as a company have not given privileges to anyone, and it is not within our powers to do so. As for distribution methods, representatives of the Craftsmen Union visit us and submit lists of the names of craftsmen who are registered with the union. For our part, we supply the portions according to this special list. I must say, however, that the names of some craftsmen who have given up their professions are still included in the list.

[Al-'Awad] Will the crisis continue for a long time, and when will it end?

[Dr. Faris] The crisis will not last long. We have stopped selling in dollars since 27 November 1994. And, in the next two months we will ask the craftsmen to come collect their portions. We will ask the people to come to us. We have also begun selling to the citizens, provided the glass is strictly intended for domestic use. I am pleased to announce to the brother citizens through TISHRIN that the company's doors are open to them so that they can buy whatever they need for their domestic needs only. Our production is good.

[Al-'Awad] In quality?

[Dr. Faris] As far as flat glass is concerned, this is quite correct. We continue to use the "Potsburg" method for the production of flat glass, which is an old established method used by many countries in the world. We have achieved a percentage execution of 80 percent. We are now considering several offers from Germany and U.S. companies.

Finally, we do not want to move in a vicious circle. What we want exactly is to completely overcome the glass crisis in order to get rid of any distribution method that gives anyone a chance for a monopoly or grants anyone special privileges and thus help to create a black market.

The memo of the Ministry of Supply we mentioned earlier refers to logical solutions. It says that unless the Ministry of Industry builds new glass factories, the crisis may disappear for a while, but it will return in one form or another due to periodic maintenance or for any other reason. Importing glass for a specific period of time during the crisis will inevitably reduce the effects of the black market and prevent hoarders and opportunists from playing their game. The question is: Why have the glass factories been kept outside investment plans up to this moment despite the local market's need for this commodity and the possibility of marketing it in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, the Gulf states, and other countries?

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Syria has always been known for its glass industry. Henceforth, we must not allow the disappearance of our role in this ancient industry which gives us an additional high value.

Minister Inspects Projects in Idlib, Hamah

JN2302200895 Damascus AL-BA'TH in Arabic 7 Feb 95 p 4

[FBIS Translated Text] Idlib/Hamah (SANA)—Dr. Salim Yasin, deputy prime minister for economic affairs, has toured the yarn factory project in Idlib Governorate. He was accompanied by Justice Minister Husayn Hassun, Industry Minister Dr. Ahmad Nizam al-Din, and Electricity Minister Munib Sa'im al-Dahr.

After being briefed on the progress of work in the project and the stages and execution percentages attained, Dr. Yasin chaired a meeting attended by the ministers of justice, industry, and electricity, party branch secretary comrade Muhammad Naffakh, Idlib Governor Zayd Hassun, and several of the officials concerned in the governorate. The conferees made a general review of what has been achieved so far and the compatibility of the work stages with the approved plans and programs.

Dr. Yasin emphasized the need to increase the tempo of work to expedite the implementation of the project in the best possible manner and to place it under actual exploitation, in view of its economic and social importance.

It is noteworthy that the project, which is estimated to cost six billion pounds, will have a production capacity of 15,000 tonnes of yarn and employ 2,500 male and female workers.

Dr. Yasin also chaired an expanded meeting at the State Company for Wool in Hamah yesterday in the presence of the ministers of industry and electricity, party branch secretary Ghassan Abu-Tawq, Hamah Governor Muhammad Sa'id Bukhaytan, the director general of the State Organization for Textile Industries, and the commissioner of police in the governorate. The meeting was also attended by the general manager of the company, the heads of sections and technicians in it, and experts from the Chinese side, which is implementing the new production line project.

Discussion dealt with the requirements of the expansion project following the installation of machines in order to place it under actual investment as soon as possible. The discussion also dealt with the current experimental operation of the new expansion line and the requirements for its best operation, including qualified technical manpower, capital, and the necessary electrical power for launching the new project.

The deputy prime minister and his companions then toured the different sections of the company where they were briefed on the new production lines and their production capacity, which will add 600 tonnes of woolen yarn annually. This will enable the company to produce 12,000 tonnes of woolen yarn annually following the commissioning of the new expansion lines.

Dr. Yasin then chaired two separate meetings for the tire and iron factories, including their technical and commercial staff, in the presence of the ministers of industry and electricity, the comrade secretary of the party branch, the governor, and the commissioner of police. The conferees reviewed the stages reached in the expansion work and the introduction of new lines of products in the two companies as demanded by the local market.

Dr. Yasin heard a briefing on the status of production in the State Company for Tires and the development and expansion measures which have been taken to ensure local market needs other than the current production of tires for agricultural machines, trucks, and tourist cars, as well as the new types of tires which have been produced to meet market demands.

The general manager of the State Company for Iron and Steel Products also briefed the meeting on the status of work in his company, the type of products which are being produced and the measures which have been taken to expand and develop the company's work in order to carry out bigger and better production plans which will help meet local market needs at suitable prices.

The deputy prime minister affirmed the importance of expediting the development and expansion work in the tire and iron factories, carrying out the studies, and considering different options on how to sell the products of the two companies according to the required technical specifications and at competitive prices.

The deputy prime minister also affirmed the need to adopt the principle that whatever cannot be sold must not be produced and the company management's responsibility in calculating the cost of production accurately, marketing the production, and achieving the approved plans in order to ensure the success of the company and to bolster the national economy.

Column Analyzes 1994 Population Census

JN2302200195 Damascus AL-BA'TH in Arabic 6 Feb 95 p 4

["Spotlights" column by 'Ali 'Abbud: "New Population Figures"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The results of the 1994 population census reveal extremely important figures which can be very useful to those who are responsible for drawing up economic and social development plans for the country.

When planners incorporate economic and social programs in the annual plans for 15 million people, they allocate appropriations, manpower, and technical capabilities adequate for that population. This is what we have been doing for several years since the 1981 population census. Now, we all realize the big economic and social changes which have taken place over the past 14

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years; changes which have necessitated new studies and plans based on approximate figures and analyses.

Some of these new studies and plans were right and several others were wrong. This was due to the fact that the plans, studies, and statistics lacked scientific accuracy. We can site several examples, but this is not the time and place to enumerate them. It is sufficient to mention just one example. For some time now, and especially during the past two years, we have been saying that Syria's population is 15 million, or slightly more. But the results of the 1994 population census have revealed that the population is 13.8 million. The difference is not due to a wrong assessment, since we have been calculating the annual increase in population according to the average growth which we have adopted since 1981. When the new population census showed that the average growth of the population had dropped from 33.5 per one thousand during the period 1970-1980 to 33.1 per one thousand during the period 1981-1994, it is only natural not to expect the population to be 15 million according to our previous assessments.

We can pause a little here to ask: What are the reasons and factors for the drop in the average growth of population in Syria from 33.5 to 33.1 per one thousand?

This question does not mean that average growth in population in Syria has become low, since it is still one of the highest averages in the world, but it means that we need to study and analyze this drop in order to know its reasons and economic and social factors. Perhaps, one of the main reasons for the drop in the average growth of population is the general drop in the fertility of Syrian women from 6.8 children in 1981 to 4.7 children in [sentence as published]. Now, is this due to family planning, the harsh conditions of life, the woman's increasing role in the development process, or avoidance of early marriage by young people due to the difficulty of securing a job, a house, etc.?

The 1984 population census also shows a drop in internal migration. Perhaps, this is the first time this has happened, and it is definitely due to the policy of Syrian rural development. Since the census has confirmed the success of this policy, it is hoped that planners benefit from the new figures and try to improve on them in order to achieve this migration without upsetting the population balance between urban and rural areas.

The 1994 census, which will be placed in the hands of researchers and planners, will dot many "I's" and cross many "T's." It should chart the course which we can follow in order to reduce the burdens of the increasing population which represent enormous pressure on economic and social plans; pressure which has led to many negative effects, the least of which is the big drop in the standard of urban services and education at all levels. We must also not forget the dangerous pollution of the environment resulting from the failure to improve basic public utilities for the population!

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India

Congress-I Stakes Claim to Manipur Government

BK2302162295 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 23 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Manipur capital, Imphal, is now witnessing hectic political activities by various parties in their bid to form a new government. The Congress-I has already staked its claim. In a message to the governor, the party has requested him to invite it to form the government as it has emerged as the single largest party. According to the PCC-I [Pradesh Congress-I Committee] chief, Mr. Radhabinod Koijam, the newly elected legislators of the party are meeting in Imphal tonight to elect their leader. The party's two central observers—Mr. M.M. Jacob and the Assam chief minister, Mr. Hiteshwar Saikia,—will be present at the meeting.

Meanwhile, leaders of the United Legislature Front [ULF] led by the Manipur People's Party [MPP] also held a meeting in Imphal earlier today. The other five non-Congress-I parties in the front include the Janata Dal, the Samata Party, the CPI [Communist Party of India], the Congress-S, and the National People's Party. According to the MPP president, Mr. Yaima Singh, the constituents of the front have empowered his party to decide the leader of the front. The MPP legislators are also meeting in Imphal tonight. The full-fledged meeting of the ULF members is scheduled for tomorrow to ratify the decision.

In the state assembly elections, the Congress-I has emerged as the largest party, winning 21 seats. All the results of 59 seats of the 60-member assembly for which elections were held have now come in. Out of the three latest results, two have gone to the Congress-I and one in favor of the Manipur People's Party. The MPP has bagged 18, the Janata Dal, 7; the Samata Party, the National People's Party, the Federal Party of Manipur, and CPI have got two seats each, while the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] and the Congress-S have secured one each. Three seats have gone to independents.

The Congress-I spokesman, Mr. V.N. Gadgil, has expressed satisfaction over his party's performance in Manipur elections. Talking to newsmen in New Delhi today, he claimed that the results show that people like to give their first preference to the Congress. Mr. Gadgil said that since the Congress-I has emerged as the largest single party, the governor should invite its leader to form the new government.

The BJP has claimed that the election results in Manipur indicate disapproval of the Congress-I policies by the people in the state. This was stated by the party spokesperson, Mrs. Sushma Swaraj, in New Delhi today while talking to newsmen.

Editorial Discusses Postponement of SAARC Summit

BK2402024895 Delhi JANSATTA in Hindi 21 Feb 95 p 6

[Editorial: "Fled in Dread"]

[FBIS Translated Text] No one should be surprised by the decision to postpone the SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation] summit conference. The apprehension was there right from the beginning. This conference was scheduled to take place in April in Delhi and this appears to have been the main reason for its postponement. At Pakistan's request, a new date is being fixed. Pakistani officials gave no details to the SAARC officials as to why the conference is being postponed. However, political observers can appreciate the difficulties for Pakistan. In the present circumstances, Pakistan can ill-afford to take the risk of having the SAARC conference convened in India. It is already involved in launching a high level tirade against India in Geneva and the relations between the two countries are already touching almost their lowest point. The Pakistan premier, Benazir Bhutto, is going to the United States at this very juncture. When finalizing the time of her visit, Benazir had indicated that she might not be able to attend the SAARC conference. It is true that such high level visits are always planned far in advance and it is very difficult to suddenly alter the dates. But it is also equally true that the date of the SAARC conference had been decided long before the dates of her visit to the United States were finalized. In fact the date and venue for the conference were finalized at the conclusion of the last summit conference. So, if Pakistan had wanted to, it could easily have delayed Benazir's U.S. visit by a week. But it appears as though Benazir deliberately wanted to create a situation that could preclude her coming to India.

Although the objective of the SAARC conference is not to resolve the political disputes between India and Pakistan, the fact that political cooperation plays a big role in improving economic and trade relations cannot be overlooked. Despite leveling charges against India for violating human rights and for enforcing the draconian TADA [Terrorism and Disruptive Activities Act] against the minorities, the Pakistani Government is well aware that its oppressive behavior towards its ethnic and religious minorities has become the butt of scathing criticism all over the world. Before the abatement of the military oppression of the Muhajirs, the death sentence on two Christians, pronounced by a Lahore court, has put Benazir in a very trying situation. The Pakistani Government cannot now take any action that might give an opportunity to the opposition parties and the fundamentalist Sunni groups to level charges against if for cooperating with India. Even in economic affairs, Pakistan is in no mood to cooperate with India, as, after the adoption of an open market system, it is quite apprehensive lest Indian trade and industry should overwhelm its

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market. The leaders of Pakistan are quite alarmed at this danger. Moreover, continued Western aid and the prolonged involvement of the government machinery in religious fanaticism has considerably weakened the structure of Pakistan's industry. Although the SAARC's officials are still hopeful of holding the conference in May, it is doubtful whether conditions will change so drastically as to lessen the intensity of Pakistani prejudices. Pakistan appears to think that it is in its own interests to make the SAARC ineffective.

Iran

U.S. Motives in Persian Gulf Examined

95LA0121A Tehran KEYHAN-E HAVA'I in English 7 Dec 94 p 30

[Article by Ali Akbar Dareini]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Despite promises from Washington that its recent military build-up in the region was not aimed at Iran, Tehran is suspicious of America's intentions in the Persian Gulf. English Desk Editor Ali Akbar Dareini comments on America's military moves as its warships step up intimidating tactics against Iranian ships.

Over the past month, American warships stationed in the Persian Gulf have intimidated at least one Iranian tugboat and a cargo vessel and several Iranian planes patrolling the region.

The U.S. intimidating tactics have been to no avail, but they have strengthened the suspicion in Tehran that the latest American military presence in the Persian Gulf brought about after Iraqi troops massed on the border with Kuwait in October was after objectives beyond what the Americans described an attempt to deter a replay of Iraq's 1990-91 invasion and seven-month occupation of Kuwait.

Many observers in Tehran maintain that the United States has used Iraqi threats as an excuse to build up a force in the Persian Gulf that would later be used against Iran.

According to the Pentagon, some 54,000 U.S. troops and at least 700 warplanes have been deployed in the sensitive Persian Gulf region.

Although American authorities have, through third party diplomatic channels, given assurances that their presence in the Persian Gulf is not aimed against Iran, the observers in Tehran seriously doubt Washington's intentions.

To most observers, Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein has been employed by the U.S. to create instability in the region and thus create an excuse for the Americans to increase their presence there and facilitate their plans to control the region. That is mainly why the Americans have, several times, betrayed and foiled attempts by Iraqi opposition groups to topple the Baghdad regime.

In October, U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry after his private meetings with Saudi and Kuwaiti leaders said he had tried to persuade them to permit a larger deployment of U.S. warplanes and an expanded storage depot of tanks and other armored vehicles.

"We want to look ahead a little bit after this crisis is resolved and find a way to posture ourselves better to prevent future crises", Perry said.

Although the rapid deployment in October of American forces in the region to protect Kuwait was said to have been triggered by domestic political considerations rather than the actual military threat, Iran has taken the American threat seriously.

For the United States, Iran has become a new Soviet Union that must be confronted and for Iran, the United States has become a symbol of arrogance and domination that must be resisted.

Washington has engaged in an active diplomacy to isolate Iran and is urging its allies to reduce trade with Iran with the aim of crippling the country's economy, and its campaign against Iran has even included interference in the country's internal affairs.

It was only in September when the U.S. ambassador to Kuwait Ryan Crocker called on Iran to end what he said "its occupation of three strategic islands in the Persian Gulf claimed by the UAE [United Arab Emirates]."

Observers in Tehran who consider the United States as the main foreign instigator of disputes between Iran and the UAE interpreted the act of interference in Iran's internal affairs as a move to prepare world public opinion for its adventurism in the future.

Iran has up until now maintained its self-restraint but it has told the United Nations that it cannot tolerate the intimidating and illegal behavior of the U.S. military in the Persian Gulf.

Nateq-Nuri Speech Views U.S. 'Pressure'

LD2402113895 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 24 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Mr. Nateq-Nuri, speaker of the Islamic Consultative Majles, in a speech before this week's Friday prayer sermons in Tehran honoring the World Qods Day [World Jerusalem Day], referred to the ignominious Gaza-Ariha [-Jericho] accord and America's heavy investment in its implementation and said: Even that treacherous accord was not implemented completely, because elections were postponed on the pretext of establishing tranquillity in the region, and the agreement concerning the ending of Jewish settlement in the occupied land has not been enacted so far.

The Majles speaker added: One of the regrettable consequences of the accord is that 'Arafat's police have placed

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itself on the side of the Israeli armed forces in killing the innocent Palestinian nation and become their accomplice.

Mr. Nateq-Nuri pointed out that in reality the Middle East peace process was an American plot being implemented by Israel toward consolidating the foundations of the U.S. Government and America's domination in the region. He considered U.S. political and economic pressure on Iran stems from the Islamic Republic of Iran's uncompromising stance in the Palestine issue and said: Palestine and Jerusalem do not belong to a particular people. Jerusalem, as the Muslims' first Qiblah, belongs to the world Muslims. Therefore its defense and liberation is one of the duties of Muslims.

Mr. Nateq-Nuri also described the defense of those Muslims who have been driven from their home and whose young are being tortured and massacred as a duty for Muslims and for the Iranian nation. Referring to the silence of the international forums regarding the Zionist crimes, he said: While human rights are being violated blatantly in the occupied lands and the Zionist regime does not pay the slightest attention to the UN resolutions, the international forums, who claim to support human rights, have chosen to keep silent in the face of those crimes.

Velayati Interviewed on Nuclear Program, Israel

JN2302205195 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1945 GMT 23 Feb 95

[Interview with Foreign Minister Dr. 'Ali Akbar Velayati by correspondent Muhammad Sadiq al-Husayni in Tehran; date not given; from the "Panorama" feature—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Husayni] Your Excellency Dr. 'Ali Akbar Velayati, given that you are the head of Iranian diplomacy, can you first brief us on the Iranian stand on the recent developments in the region, particularly the issue of a Middle east settlement?

[Velayati] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. We believe developments in the Middle East, particularly at the Palestinian and Lebanese level, have witnessed major progress and a big leap in terms of heightened Islamic awareness and emphasis on the Palestinian identity in all its qualitative and quantitative dimensions. The Zionist enemy has recently emphasized that Islamic awareness constitutes a strategic threat to its illegal entity.

[Al-Husayni] Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres said in Paris a few days ago that his country is ready to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT] only if his government reaches bilateral peace agreements with the countries in the region, including Iran. What is your reply to this Israeli stand?

[Velayati] All the countries in the region, including Egypt, have rejected Israel's conditions, which seek to evade its joining the NPT and not to halt the expansionist nuclear program. The signing of this treaty has nothing to do with these topics.

As for Israel's conditions, they are just an excuse to keep its nuclear arsenal, which is a major threat to peace and security in the region.

[Al-Husayni] Your Excellency, also within this context, there were reports that the new U.S. Congress leader and the leader of the Republican majority have asked President Clinton's administration to suspend its assistance to Russia if Moscow continues with armament and nuclear cooperation with Iran. How do you view such a stand? What results does it entail?

[Velayati] In my opinion, the head of the U.S. Congress knows very well about the nonmilitary purposes of the reactor. The visits by the International Atomic Energy Agency delegation to the Iranian nuclear installations explicitly confirm the peaceful purposes of the Iranian reactors. The objective the U.S. Congress leader seeks to achieve from these lies and the media falsehoods—in addition to personally benefiting from the current local rivalries—is to offer political support to Israel along the track of capitulation and to extricate this regime from the dilemma and cover up for the crises Israel has fabricated in the occupied territories against an oppressed and persecuted people, the Palestinian people.

[Al-Husayni] We go back to the Middle East. What would Iran's position be if Syria reached a peace agreement with Israel? Will this affect your position on the peace process and on your relations with Syria in particular?

[Velayati] The Syrian Arab Republic and the Islamic Republic of Iran share strategic relations based on solid foundations. We support Syria's steadfastness in the face of the conspiracies of the Zionist entity and Syria's achievement of its great ambitions to restore all Syrian and Lebanese territories and all other occupied Arab and Islamic territories. Regarding the strong will of the Syrian leadership and its solid determination and bold and wise policies in its struggle against injustice and to remove occupation, as well as its support for the Islamic struggle in the region to achieve its sacred ambitions, we appreciate all these honorable positions and feel optimistic and satisfied with this.

[Al-Husayni] Dr. Velayati, the file of normalization with Iraq has been on your desk since the end of the Gulf oil war. Everybody knows that you differentiate between your attitude toward the Iraqi people and the Baghdad government. Regarding the ending of the Iraq blockade, what will your country's position on this issue be if Iraq returns to the international community while President Saddam Husayn is in power?

[Velayati] We are a neighbor of Iraq. We want to have good-neighborly relations with Iraq based on mutual respect and noninterference in internal affairs, depending on Islamic foundations and international

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laws and norms. As we have said in the past, we want to enhance our relations with Iraq on the condition that Iraq should show goodwill in all fields. Iraq should not make the Islamic Republic of Iran a scapegoat to achieve its objectives and end its problems with others. According to our information, the Iraqi people are experiencing difficult and harsh conditions, especially regarding the health situation and living standards. Iraq is not able to provide the requirements of life and medication. We should not allow this injustice. The Iraqi people should not foot the bill for the Iraqi regime's violations and sins. I think that initiatives could be launched to remove the problems that are facing the Iraqi people within the context of international laws and Security Council resolutions.

[Al-Husayni] The secretary general of the French Foreign Ministry visited your country recently. It was observed that the visit coincided with a noticeable change in Iranian-French relations. What is the most salient feature of your future relations with France, especially since the followers of de Gaulle have started to knock on the doors of the Elysee?

[Velayati] Our past relations have had their ups and downs. However, the two sides have shared views. The political independence of the two countries and the mutual interests of the two peoples require enhancing bilateral ties. This could result in fruitful steps in the political, economic, and cultural fields. In general, there are many practical fields for cooperation between the two countries. We are optimistic about the future of these relations.

[Al-Husayni] Finally, Dr. Velayati: You certainly know that Israel wants holy Jerusalem as its eternal capital, while other international and regional sides have disputes over the status of the Islamic and Christian holy shrines. Your country used to hold an international celebration on holy Jerusalem Day. Will you please address a message to the Islamic world on this occasion?

[Velayati] As the listeners know, His Eminence Imam Khomeyni, may God be pleased with him, announced in his historical call in 1980 that the last Friday of the blessed month of Ramadan should be considered an international day for Jerusalem in order to remind people of the danger usurper Israel is posing to holy Jerusalem, the Muslims' first qibla. This call came as a result of the escalation of the Zionist entity's brutal attacks against the Palestinian brothers and sisters. His eminence said that this day is a memorable one in the march of the Palestinian people. He urged all Muslims all over the world to declare their solidarity by staging massive marches and to voice support for the legitimate rights of the Muslim Palestinian people. Out of my duty and my faith, I voice absolute support, taking into account the great term of reference and founder of the great Islamic Republic of Iran and the teachings of the leader of the Islamic revolution Ayatollah Khamene'i, may God preserve him, who supports the wronged Palestinians. I urge all Muslims to participate in these marches. I also point out that the Palestinians are witnessing their best circumstances, in my view, in terms of applying their duties toward and are enjoying high morale in defying tyranny and occupation. I hope we will be in full agreement and will exert our utmost efforts within this framework. The various Palestinian figures and parties have realized the current circumstances, maintained their principles, withstood various pressures, and suffered much in order to defend dear Jerusalem, whose liberation constitutes the first and last objective of all Muslims. I hope that we will soon see Muslims of the world and all the faithful people perform prayers in holy Jerusalem.

[Al-Husayni] Thank you, Your Excellency, minister.

[Velayati] You are welcome.

Official Reviews Income, Expenditure Targets

LD2402103795 Tehran IRNA in English 1018 GMT 24 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 24, IRNA—The plan and budget organization's macro-economic bureau chief, Farzad Taheripour, outlined the income and expenditure targets of the country in an exclusive interview with the 'ECONOMIC REVIEW' of the english-language daily 'IRAN NEWS.'

The paper quoted Taheripour as saying "it is predicted that by the end of the current Iranian year, (ending March 20) total government revenues will amount to 28,606 billion rials, out of which rials 5,500 and 2,400 billion represent tax incomes, petroleum revenues and other incomes respectively."

The second plan revenue targets approved for the current year had envisaged total revenues of rls. [rials] 29,874 billion which was higher than the realized figure. Out of this total, wrote the paper, tax revenues, petroleum and other incomes were targeted to grow to rls. 7,755, 17,652 and 4,467 billion respectively.

Taheripour referred to some of the important reasons for the divergence of realized figures from the target figures and said that tax-revenue targets did not materialize according to predictions mainly because of shortfalls in indirect tax collections.

Indirect taxes could not be collected as scheduled because the government did not increase foreign trade tariffs and commercial benefit taxes, the paper quoted the official. He said a reduction of imports also contributed to lower inditect tax revenues.

Partly compensating this, he noted, is the increase in direct tax collection, which surpassed the target by 5 percent. The higher petroleum export earnings came about due to a surge in international oil prices.

Turning to expenditures, Taheripour told the daily that total expenditures under the 1373 budget law provisions

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were targeted to rise to rls. 30,049 billion by the end of the current Iranian year. However, he added, according to the latest estimates, expenditures would be confined to rls. 29,326 billion, reported the daily.

The shortfalls mainly represented lower-than-expected development expenditures, whereas current expenditures would surpass the original estimate by 5 percent, Taheripour said. He aadded that the development expenditure shortfall would amount to some 14 percent, compared with the original target.

Based on the above analyses, the official predicted a 1373 budget deficit of 720 billion rials, some 2 percent of the total budget estimate.

Regarding the private-sector rial liquidity figure (the sum of money and quasi-money), the official referred to the original estimate for the end of the current year which was given as rls. 53,858 billion.

This figure was expected to be surpassed and rise to rls. 60,000 billion by March 20, 1995, and increase of 25 percent over last year, Taheripour said.

According to the official, the increase was mainly due to the rial financing of the foreign debt repayment schedule. The excess rial liquidity has let to an increase in the inflation rate.

Accordingly, the index of wholesale prices in the first nine months of the current Iranian year was expected to incearse by 40 percent compared to the similar period of last year, the official was quoted as saying.

The retail price index was expected to increase by an average of 32.9 percent during the same period, said the paper. Taheripour referred to the gap between the two indices and said the existence of this gap showed that the percentage of inflation gripping the country was not due to hoarding or underselling, but pointed to fundamental structural economic weaknesses, reported the paper.

It added that the inflation rate estimate for the current year was 18 percent. Year-on-year comparison showed that the actual inflation rate would almost double, compared to the original estimates, Taheripour noted.

Turning to production, he said that gross domestic product was estimated to increase by 5.3 to 5.9 percent in 1373. In actual fact, noted Taheripour, the gross domestic product would probably increase by 5 percent, less than the original estimates.

Banking system loans to the private and public sectors, according to note 2 of the 1373 budget law, were estimated at rls. 7,000 billion, a target which seemed to have been realized, reported the paper.

Commenting on the foreign exchange revenues, Taheripour said the oil revenue in 1373 would amount to dlrs. [dollars] 13.5 to dlrs. 14 billion: together with dlrs. 3.5 billion worth of non-oil revenues. Repayment of foreign debt arrears would reduce this amount, added the official. Out of this total, the paper quoted Taheripour, some dlrs. 3 billion would be spent on last year's accumulated letter of credit commitments. So a net foreign exchange revenue of dlrs. 14 billion would probably be realized in the current year, he added.

Turning to the next year's budget bill currently being debated in parliament, Taheripour said that total revenues for 1374 were estimated at rls. 41,165 billion, composed of rls. 7,862 billion, rls. 25,113.6 billion representing tax revenues, oil income and other income respectively.

However, he added, based on the second development plan provisions, the total 1374 revenue should be fixed at rls. 36,219 billion, composed of 7,862 billion, rls. 21,508 billion and rls. 6,849 billion representing tax, oil and other incomes respectively, the paper reported.

Commenting on the divergence between the budget figures from the second plan targets, Taheripour said that 1374 budget estimates, in addition to the general government revenues, also contained specialized government revenues while this latter item was not reflected in the second plan targets, due to the increase in international oil prices.

Therefore, rls. 5,000 billion have been added to the revenue estimates in the 1374 budget, said the official adding that out of this total, rls. 2,757 billion represented the rial equivalent of the reduction in the foreign exchange commitments, which accrued to the central bank.

On the expenditure side, Taheripour added that rls. 800 billion have been earmarked in the budget for raising the civil servants' salaries, to reflect the increased rate of inflation, as stipulated in note 38 of the 1374 budget bill.

Majlis Urges Government To Ease Economic Development

LD2302232995 Tehran IRNA in English 2204 GMT 23 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 24, IRNA—Member of the presiding board of Majlis, Mohammad Reza Bahonar said here on Wednesday [22 February] that the Majlis has advised the government to reduce the speed of carrying out economic development plans and restructure the economic and monetary system due to the fact that it could not tackle the economic problems.

Bahonar who is also Tehran's MP and spokesman of Majlis Commission for Economic, Financial and Cooperative Affairs told IRNA Majlis correspondent that a certain plan to control monetary, financial and banking policies should go into force. Such a plan would complement the development projects and would save the honour gained by the government through implementing heavy infrastructural projects, he said.

He said that some members of the cabinet were resisting the proposal to ease down the speed of carrying out the

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economic development plan and believed that there was no problem in this regard, but fortunately, they have reached the point to believe there are some problems and admitted that the process of the economic development needs adjustment.

The MP said, "We do not believe in shift of the modification policy launched through the first development plan, but, insist that the speed of carrying out the economic development plan should come down and revisions should be made in the modification programmes."

Elaborating the proposal of the Majlis, Bahonar said that the proposal would not bring about a complete change in the economic system, but, it has called for fighting inflation, accelerate the privatization programme and push the projects under construction to the stage of operation.

The proposal recommended to stop opening additional development projects from now on, he said.

Bahonar said that the officials of different economic sectors demanded a revision in the process of decision-making, they believe that the views of the consumers and the ministries and institutions that need credit and resources to implement the projects are being ignored and decisions are being imposed upon Ministry of Finance and the economic affairs, the Central Bank of Iran and the financial system of the country as well.

Bahonar challenged the views of the officials of the economic sector over the roots of the price hike and the inflation and the growth of the circulating cash in the society and said that the current expenditure and the money being spent on the development plans and the extravagance of the state companies should be brought into control.

He said in the meantime that the government should limit the development plan and that the cabinet should reach agreement with Majlis in this respect and act in coordination with Majlis.

The MP said that implementing the privatization programme, declining the role of the government in the economic sector and putting an end to the projects which did not enjoy significant advancement, serious campaign against smuggling of goods and controlling the growth of liquidity in non-productive sectors would be effective in improving the current economic situation.

Bahonar said that in 1970s the country depended strictly on the oil revenues and that during the first development plan, the oil revenues were spent on infrastructural investment for alternative sources of income rather than being spent on the current expenditures.

He emphasized the importance of the investment on the alternative sources of income for oil revenues and said that each Iranian would enjoy one-twelfth of the per capita income from the oil revenues compared with 20 years ago in light of the population growth and fall of oil prices. In the 10 years to come the per capita income would reach one-hundredth of what each Iranian enjoyed 20 years ago from oil revenues, he said.

Bahonar referred to the huge investments made in different economic sectors and said that with a maximum possible production and a minimized consumption and promotion of the culture of law and order in financial system would pave the way for an acceptable and healthy economy.

He stressed that the government's spendings should be cut down and the wasteful spending of the state wealth in the economic sector should be dealt with seriously.

Rafsanjani Leads Friday Prayers on al-Quds Day

LD2402121395 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 24 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Today's magnificent [al-Quds Day] ceremony continued with the unifying Friday prayers under the imamate of Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Hashemi-Rafsanjani. We draw your attention to our colleagues report on the sermons of Tehran's Friday prayers:

[Begin recording] [Unidentified correspondent] In his Friday prayer sermons, Hashemi-Rafsanjani pointed out the intensification of the epic of Palestine and the intifadah and described the people's presence in today's massive demonstration as a sign that the holy aspiration of Palestine was alive and continuing, as well as a noble move in defense of the oppressed, especially the Muslims living under tyranny.

The president briefly assessed and analyzed the 4,500-year-old history of the holy land of Palestine and described it as the most eventful corner of the world, saying: The most basic human culture and civilization was formed in Palestine. Palestine has the most important window linking the divine to earth and has always been under the scrutiny of divine religions.

The president spoke about the ethnic and religious characteristics of that holy land and said: World arrogance today wants to create an illegal nation based on racial traits in this region.

The president described the period following the Second World War as the most bitter and ugly period in the history of humanity in the land of Palestine. He said: It would be a great mistake if humanity, especially the Islamic and Arab world, forgets this important phase in the history of Palestine.

The president pointed out the tyrannical plot of aggression under the guise of seeking peace with the assistance of international circles and stressed: Considering the end of the era of military expeditions and the use of military force, the world powers of the East and West created Israel, this malignant filthy tumor, through the implementation of political plots.

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Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani condemned the compromising and so-called peace move of certain leaders of Palestinian factions and stressed: It would be a great mistake to believe this weak movement will lead to peace. In fact, this only resembles a layer of ash covering a fire that will rekindle with the storm of opposition.

The president said: If you want peace, stability, and tranquillity in Palestine and next to the world's energy resources, you must give the Palestinians their rights and allow 4 million oppressed refugees to return to their homes. In this context, he said:

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] In these conditions, we see that Islam's power is paradoxically directed at the service of those running the scene of the issue of Palestine, this calamity of the century, this open oppression.

The rights of a people that have clearly been usurped are going unnoticed. And anyone who opposes this trend is tainted with being against peace and tranquillity or supporting terrorism and adventurism. This deviation and this unjust historical distortion is taking place during the age of communication and in a world that apparently defends human rights; under circumstances when peoples forgotten by history are lifting their heads out of the ruins of their countries, regrouping and restating their characters and identities; countries that were swallowed 80 years ago by Marxist materialism have been rejuvenated today and the people have reclaimed their mosques. Today we see that a living, aware, struggling, and oppressed nation, who are on the scene, are today being suppressed to this extent.

[Correspondent] Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani reaffirmed: The world of arrogance is subjecting Islamic Iran to the the most unfair slander and onslaught because of its refusal to accept this treacherous move. They accuse us of being against peace and supporting terrorism.

Speaking about the disarmament agreements and America's false propaganda in this context, Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani said: America believes all countries should be disarmed. But Israel should have all sorts of weapons at its disposal.

In the second sermon of the prayers, the president pointed to the new policy of the government to control prices and reform distribution. He said: The government will in future give stability to prices through the determined implementation of this policy.

The president also thanked the devoted and grateful people of Islamic Iran for their support for the government and their presence on the various arenas of the Islamic revolution. [end recording]

'Huge Crowds' Mark International Day of Quds

LD2402090395 Tehran IRNA in English 0838 GMT 24 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 24, IRNA—Huge crowds of fasting Muslims today poured into the streets throughout Iran to participate in demonstrations marking the international 'Qods' day with shouts of 'Death to Israel", "Death to U.S.", "Palestine belongs to Palestinains", and "Death to compromisers."

The last Friday of the fasting month of Ramadan (this year falling on February 24) has been procalimed as the international 'Qods' day by the founder of the Islamic Republic, the late Imam Khomeyni.

The day is a rallying point for the faithful to voice their most important concern—the liberation of the holy Qods (first Qibla of the Muslims) from the yoke of the Zionist.

Sheykholeslam Views Jerusalem Day

NC2402104295 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0550 GMT 24 Feb 95

[Interview with Hoseyn Sheykholeslam, deputy foreign minister for Arab and African Affairs, by unidentified correspondent in Tehran on 24 February; from the special feature "The Cry of an Ummah"—live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Sheykholeslam] This program, God willing, will show how the observance of Jerusalem Day in Iran and in all other regions lends support to the Palestinian and Lebanese combatants and is instrumental in the defeat and withdrawal of the Zionist usurpers.

[Correspondent] I thank you for your presence. Deputy Foreign Minister for the Arab and African Affairs Desk, in general, we can almost say that the majority of these countries are Muslims. How do you assess the ceremonies marking Jerusalem Day in these regions?

[Sheykholeslam] Every year is better than the one before. In some countries, such as Lebanon and Palestine, this day is observed extensively. In others, like Egypt, Turkey, and Pakistan in particular—even though that is not in my area—it is observed on a large scale.

In Bahrain and in some southern countries in the Persian Gulf, in general I can say that every year has been better than the one before. This year for the first time Hamas has announced Jerusalem Day inside Palestine. Every year the Islamic Jihad announced this and the Palestinians went to the mosques and staged demonstrations. The Zionists adopted a ruthless approach and closed the roads, besieging the al-Aqsa mosque, which culminated in clashes, bloodshed, and killing.

This year, with Hamas' official announcement, I think that Jerusalem Day will be observed with greater glory in Jerusalem and, God willing, the ceremonies will end with peace and goodwill and without clashes.

[Correspondent] God willing. Thank you very much. [passage omitted]

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His eminence the imam's famous remark "Israel should be destroyed" constitutes a principled stance for the Islamic Republic of Iran and the combatant Muslim groups active in the region on the issue of Palestine and shows the illegitimacy of the very basis of the Zionist regime. Where do you think this stance stems from and why should we insist on the need to eliminate the Zionist regime?

[Sheykholeslam] As you mentioned, the Zionist system has no legitimacy from the vantage point of international law, as it is devoid of the three characteristics of a country, that is, people, a definite territory, and a government. This entity is based on usurping the sovereignty of the Palestinian people, contravening the UN Charter, negating justice, directly assisting the United States and Britain and growing under the aegis of the known ideology of Zionism, that is, usurping and occupying the area from the Nile to the Euphrates. This is characterized by war, crises, and aggression in the region through domination. The most important of these wars for gaining domination over the crises, which it spawned itself, are the 1956, 1967, and 1973 wars and the aggression against Lebanon in 1982.

After the victory of the Islamic Revolution, the first experience in Lebanon, that is, the trend of the withdrawal of the Zionists, began. They had occupied the area up to Beirut. The U.S., French, Italian, and British forces had been deployed in Beirut as if to say: We endorse this occupation from the political point of view and even militarily we are on its side.

But the rightful struggle was that of the Lebanese nation, Hizballah in particular, which consigned the Americans and their allies, in particular the Israelis themselves, to hell by the dozen. This resulted in Israel's retreat. This is the first time Israel was forced to evacuate the land it had occupied. When the Islamic Revolution triumphed, this slogan that you mention that is the elimination and effacement of Israel's existence, the principled slogan that his eminence the imam chose and stressed many years ago—that is, at the outset of his activities—is the basis for the Muslims who follow his line. The first experiment was as I stated in Lebanon.

Today, inside Palestine, this imposed illegitimate entity that other people grafted onto this region from the outside has forcibly usurped the territory of the Palestinians and is imposing itself on them by force. Unfortunately, some regional forces are collaborating with them. God willing, as I stated in the beginning, we can see how the popular movement inside Palestine and in the Islamic countries is proliferating daily. Today Israel is facing basic problems from within in maintaining security, as well as political problems between the Palestinians and Zionists.

[Correspondent] Thank you very much for your explanation. Your Excellency, all of us are aware that there have been extremely memorable, glorious, and unforgettable days in the history of our Islamic Revolution, one of which is Jerusalem Day. I wish to ask you why we give so much importance to this day; and in principle, what is the effect of the grand observance of the righteous struggle of the Muslim Palestinian people? Could you please elaborate in this regard?

[Sheykholeslam] As you know, our revolution introduced a new modus operandi under the guidance of Imam Khomeyni—may God's peace be upon him—for the people of the world to resist the powers of world arrogance. It is very simple. The people should take to the streets in millions, empty-handed, but with divine motivation and under a specified leadership to make their demands clear. In our revolution it was the toppling of the shah and the establishment of an Islamic government.

What we have on Jerusalem Day is the exercise of the same type of activity for the liberation of Palestine and the al-Aqsa mosque, the first qiblah of the Muslims. In the auspicious month of Ramadan the people who are inspired by its spirituality and their reliance on the Friday prayers—his eminence the imam in his earlier messages declared the last Friday as Jerusalem Day, probably because it coincides with the last ten nights of Ramadan [considered the most auspicious]—millions should take to the streets in the Islamic countries and go to the Friday congregations. With such divine sentiments they should seek to converge in calling for the liberation of Palestine and the destruction of Israel, they should shout the slogans: "Death to Israel! Long live Palestine!"

With such leadership they should be successful. We perceive that this popular movement, which existed in this same form in Iran, is shaking the very foundations of the despotic and occupationist government in Palestine. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] In the first part of Your Excellency's remarks you mentioned that in the history of aggression and occupation, its landmarks were, for example, the 1967 war and the occupation of Lebanon up to Beirut in 1982. Then they retreated and created a security zone for themselves in southern Lebanon. Our revolution triumphed in 1979 and we observe that this occupation took place three years after the victory of the Islamic Revolution, and then came the withdrawal. Does this period of three years indicate that they were appraising our Islamic Revolution—that is, considering whether they should occupy Lebanon? Or did they think afterwards that they had made a mistake and then withdraw? What was it?

[Sheykholeslam] The effects of our revolution were not very clear to them. Their first experiment was in Lebanon, in my opinion. As you see, after that Israel sought to retreat even through what they call the Gaza-Jericho accord. This is also a form of retreat in order to retain the remainder by giving up a very small part to the—unfortunately compromising—Palestinians to administer. [passage omitted]

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As you know, the next phase of this accord was to be the calling of elections in Gaza and Jericho; but it has been held in abeyance because they are aware that if they were to hold elections today the Muslims and the combatant forces would win a majority. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] Thank you very much Your Excellency for your elaboration.

'Final Victory' Resolution Issued

LD2402102195 Tehran IRNA in English 0957 GMT 24 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 24, IRNA—The participants in the massive rallies marking the international Qods day, underlined the need for confrontation against arrogance and resistance until the annihilation of the Zionist regime.

In a resolution issued at the end of their rally today, they pledged that the combatant and oppressed nation of Palestine, receiving support from the world Muslims, will continue their campaign until achievement of final victory.

They condemned violation of human and legitimate rights of the oppressed people of Palestine in the occupied territories and sacrilege of sanctuaries in "the land of revelation."

Denouncing the silence of the so-called human rights organizations, the resolution termed it as another disgrace in the history of the rights of human beings and called for investigation into and reaction to the issue by independent international bodies and Islamic countries.

It considered mobilization of all the material and spiritual potentials of the Islamic world and campaign against the usurper Zionist regime, and threatening the interests of its supporters as the only way to liberate Qods.

The demonstrators also reiterated the unity of Islamic countries and Muslim youth in support of the intifadah.

Citizens To Have Identity Codes as of 'Next Year'

LD2302230895 Tehran IRNA in English 2140 GMT 23 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 24, IRNA—All Iranian nationals will be given national identity codes during the first half of the next year, said the head of the National Identification Organization .

The head of the organization Rahmani pointed out that the identity cards, marked by 10-digit national codes, will be issued for Iranians as young as five years old for a four-year period which includes 15 million people.

Rahmani added that the program, based on analyzing the experiences of some 60 countries in the field, is carried out using sophisticated technology to avoid any falsification attempts.

Outlining efforts to correct the country's identification system, he referred to the setup of 76 indentity data bank sites in Tehran as well as some other cities which will amount to 150 at the end of the Second Five-Year Developement Plan.

Construction of Oil Platform Nearly Complete

LD2302211695 Tehran IRNA in English 2058 GMT 23 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sari, Mazandaran Prov., Feb. 24, IRNA—Some 85 percent of construction work on the first drilling and exploration marine oil platform in northern part of Iran has been done in Iran's Sadra marine industrial factory, said the manager of the factory, Qassem Golnejad Wednesday [22 February].

He further said that 70 million dollars equivalent to 960 million rials have so far been spent on building of such a platform.

It is also expected this platform will be put into operation in early 1374 (started March 21, 95).

He specified that Iran's Sadra drilling platform is being installed in the 91 meters depth of the sea with 3 pillars at a height of 127 meters weighing 8,000 tons. This platform is capable of drilling oil wells with a depth of 6,000 meters

The Sadra marine industrial factory is located in east of Shahid Salimi power plant of Nekh City, Mazandaran Province.

Pakistan

High Court Acquits 2 Persons in Blasphemy Case

BK2402045295 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 24 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A division bench of Lahore High Court has acquitted accused Rehmat Masih and Selamat Masih in the blasphemy case in Lahore. Announcing the judgment, the court asked the government for strict action against those trying to create disturbances among various sections of the society. The division bench comprised Mr. Justice Arif Iqbal Bhatti and Mr. Justice Chaudhary Khurshid Ahmad.

According to APP [expansion unknown], 54 persons involved in crimes have been arrested in Karachi during the last 24 hours. Illegal arms and stolen property have been recovered from them. Twenty-three others were arrested for breach of peace. In the Punjab, 33 leaders of religious groups have been arrested in different cities allegedly involved in instigating clashes and different crimes. They have been arrested to ensure peace and safeguard life and property of the people. APP quoting the provincial Home Department sources says a number of cases have been registered against them.

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Proposal To Reduce Defense Spending Criticized

BK2002162995 Karachi NAWA-I-WAQT in Urdu 19 Feb 95 p 10

[Editorial: "Defense Budget—Dictation Concerning the Country's Defense Should Not be Accepted"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The World Bank has advised Pakistan and India to freeze their defense expenditure for two to three years. Pakistan has refused to accept the proposal to unilaterally reduce its defense spending. However, it has been reported that the prime minister, her adviser on economic affairs, the secretary in the Ministry of Finance, and other officials will go to Washington at the end of this month and exchange views with the World Bank authorities. World organizations have also now started subscribing to the attitude adopted by the Western countries on defense spending. Our country is situated in a region where India is determined to become a minisuperpower and various countries, including Pakistan, have become the target of its aggression. All three of its armed forces—the Navy, the Army, and the Air Force—are larger than its legitimate defense needs and they are being expanded further. Starting with nuclear weapons and missiles, India has been carrying out separate programs in space technology, on which funds have been expended recklessly. Last year, there was an increase of 22 billion rupees in its defense budget. Neither the United States nor any financial institution has objected to any of its programs. On the other hand, there was pressure on Pakistan to reduce its defense spending, although we are facing disputes one after another. India's military pressure has been constantly mounting on our borders. There have been wars over the Kashmir issue and even now Kashmir is an area where the threat of war looms. Just a couple of days ago, the Indian minister, Rajesh Pilot, used threatening language. The Indian prime minister, Narasimha Rao, himself issued threats to invade Azad Kashmir. It is quite strange that this country, which itself has been manufacturing military equipment for several decades and stockpiling them, has been left to go scot free, and now Pakistan has been bracketed with it. In no way can Western experts deny the fact that even if India halts its military preparations at the existing level, the same level was spoiling the balance of power in the subcontinent to a dangerous level several years ago. As far as Pakistan's military budget is concerned, we are constrained to allocate our scarce resources to it. If the United States gets the Kashmir issue resolved, halts Indian troop mobilization on Siachen, makes our borders secure, and if we do not have the threat of any nuclear attack, what sort of objection will Pakistan have to reducing its military budget and diverting it to other sectors? World organizations do not have any objection to giving orders regarding each sector of our economy, and now they have targeted our defense sector as well. Our government should make it clear to them that any compromise on the country's defense will be tantamount to endangering our existence and stability.

Editorial Urges Steps To Boost Air Defense

BK2402015595 Lahore JANG in Urdu 23 Feb 95 p 3

[Editorial: "India's Military Buildup—What Are We Doing?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The speed at which India is increasing its military might is extremely disquieting. It has already been honeymooning with the United States and the two have concluded agreements on defense cooperation and the production of light combat aircraft. India has also succeeded in establishing defense relations with Russia as close as those it had with the erstwhile Soviet Union. It is buying the most modern MiG aircraft from Russia using the loan which Russia gave to India. On the other hand, our situation is that for years we did not buy any planes for the Pakistan Air Force. The United States, by resorting to bullying and fraud, is holding back the supply of F-16 planes. We have paid for them, but they are rotting in the warehouse, and they will probably be supplied to us when they have become useless and obsolete.

Despite its bad economic situation, Russia refused very rudely to sell us its latest military aircraft. We are facing the problem of spare parts for the F-16 planes that we already have, while some of these planes have crashed under mysterious circumstances. The foreign minister has acknowledged in the National Assembly that our defense has been weakened due to the aforementioned factors. Given this situation, we have to understand where we stand, because it is sophisticated air power which guarantees effective defense. The role of the Pakistan Air Force is of paramount importance in a future war. It seems that an international attempt is being made now to cripple Pakistan's defenses as well. The authorities should think this over with due seriousness.

Oil Minister: Gas Pipeline With Iran 'Vital'

LD1902203195 Tehran IRNA in English 2003 GMT 19 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, Feb. 19, IRNA—Pakistani Oil and Natural Resources Minister Anwar Saifullah Khan here Sunday [19 February] called as "vital" project to lay down natural gas pipelines to transfer Iran's gas to Pakistan and said that his respective government seriously followed up the issue.

Saifullah Khan, who made the remark in a meeting with Iranian Ambassador to Islamabad Mohammad Mehdi Akhund-Zadeh here on Sunday, expressed satisfaction with developments made in the said field.

He added that the project would jointly be implemented by Iran and Pakistan based on a contract concluded between him and the Iranian officials in the course of his last month visit.

The Pakistani official said that his government did not oppose the continuation of the pipeline to India via

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Pakistan in view of large demand for the commodity in the Pakistani and Indian economic markets.

Referring to the imminent convention of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) member countries' session in Islamabad (March 14- 15), Akhund-Zadeh said implementation of such an "important" regional project could serve as a model for cooperation among ECO members.

Founded by Iran, Turkey and Pakistan, ECO expanded to include Afghanistan as well as the republics of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Bhutto Inaugurates Karachi Hydrocracker Plant

BK2402044095 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Overseas Service in English 0800 GMT 23 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The prime minister, Benazir Bhutto, has said the new industrial projects being launched in the country are aimed at ensuring flow of investment and overall development in various areas.

Addressing the groundbreaking ceremony of a hydrocracker project in Karachi this morning, she said during her 15-month period of government there have been foreign investments worth $12 billion in energy sector only. She said 1994 had been the year of signing the memorandums of understanding, the current year would prove to be the year of ground breaking, and 1998—the election year—would be the year of completion of these projects. The prime minister said her government has been working to solve political problems and strengthen the democratic culture. Its priorities include improving the condition of the common man and providing them necessities of life.

Referring to the hydrocracker project, Ms. Benazir Bhutto said it is designed to process heavy fuel oil available from local refineries. She said under the petroleum policy already announced, a number of restrictions have been lifted to allow increased private sector participation.

Speaking on the occasion, the federal minister for industry and production, retired Brigadier Mohammad Asghar, called upon the private investors to fully utilize the concessions provided by the government in the petroleum sector. The federal minister for petroleum and natural resources, Mr. Anwar Saifullah Khan, described the hydrocracker plant as a milestone in the country's refining industry.

Radio Pakistan's Karachi representative says the project is a joint venture of State Petroleum Refining and Petrochemical Corporation, and the Crescent Petroleum International of Sharjah. It would upgrade 1.65 million tons per year of crude to high-value distillate fuel products, such as liquid petroleum gas, motor gasoline, kerosene, jet fuel, diesel, fuel oil, and (?sulfa).

Seismic Center Not To Monitor Nuclear Activity

BK2302095595 Islamabad THE PAKISTAN OBSERVER in English 23 Feb 95 pp 1, 3

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad (APP)—The Foreign Office [FO] categorically said Wednesday [22 February] that seismic station near Chakwal was neither installed to monitor Pakistan nuclear programme nor does it have the capability to detect nuclear radiations.

Describing a news report published in an English daily as preposterous the Foreign Office said detecting or monitoring any nuclear radiations were beyond the scope of this seismic station. In a clarification issued here the Foreign Office said nuclear radiation did not generate seismic waves like earthquakes or underground explosions hence "seismic arrays" were not capable of detecting the same.

The purpose of monitoring equipment and station, it said, was to monitor seismic events and no more. Hundreds of seismic monitoring stations are operating around the world. Out of these, 150 stations are functioning within the Group of Scientific Experts network. Countries like China, Turkey, Iran, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Russia are amongst the many participating in this global cooperative effort. Information from these centres will be shared by all the participants.

India is also participating in GSETT-3 [expansion unknown] exercise and its array based on equipment and technology supplied by the US, UK, Sweden and Norway is already in position and functional near Bangalore.

The attention of the Foreign Office, it said, was drawn to an article in an English daily published under the caption "Non- intrusive Nuclear Inspection begins". The press release said the article is seriously flawed in its approach and entirely inaccurate in its findings.

Since 1990, Pakistan has participated in the efforts of a Group of Scientific Experts (GSE) to consider international cooperative measures to detect and identify seismic events. This group has been working since 1976 in the Conference on Disarmament under the aegis of the United Nations in Geneva. The mandate of this group is to establish a viable global monitoring system for detecting and identifying seismic events throughout the world.

The factual position set out above should help dispel all doubts on this issue and bring an end to the speculative and self serving comments which have recently appeared in the Press. In order to place the issue in its correct perspective and to put an end to mischievous and irresponsible commentaries in the Press, a detailed background of the case is given below. It is hoped that his information will put to rest any apprehensions and questions, real or contrived, once and for all on this matter.

With a view to acquire and develop a reliable capability to monitor natural and man-made seismic events. Pakistan participated in the second global technical test of

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the GSE (GSETT-2) under the auspices of UN Conference on Disarmament. The technical evaluation of (GSETT-2) results were found encouraging. Some equipment for seismic monitoring was received by Pakistan in 1991 to enable it to participate in this test.

In view of the rapid advancement being made in the seismic equipment and due to the fact that its existing seismic units have become obsolete it has become necessary for Pakistan to modernise its seismic detection capability. One such possibility is the use of newly-designed seismic Arrays under UN sponsorship. Currently these Arrays are being tested worldwide under the name of GSETT-3 experiment. These Arrays can clearly distinguish between man-made and natural seismic events.

In view of the immense usefulness of the GSE, the government of Pakistan had decided to remain associated with the third technical test of the GSE (GSETT-3). Because of its participation in this exercise Pakistan was to receive in "Alpha" key seismic Array. The Array was to become operational by 1st January 1995 to become part of the global monitoring exercise which has already commenced on that date. Delay in launching of our Array has been caused due to postponement in the supply of equipment donated by the US and Norway. The station is to be manned, maintained and operated entirely by Pakistani engineers and technicians.

For the time being, however, because of the non-arrival of the equipment, the station has not been set up. As and when the equipment is received it will be capable only of detecting seismic disturbances and will have no other capability.

Loan Defaulting Companies Ordered To Liquidate

BK2002152795 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 20 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Economic Coordination Committee of the Cabinet has directed the Punjab Cooperatives Board for Liquidation to expedite payment to the affectees of cooperatives and ensure the recovery of loans by all means from the debtors of the defunct cooperatives. The committee, which reviewed the implementation of the relief package for the affectees at its meeting in Islamabad today, considered the causes of delay in the disposal of cases relating to the liquidation of the companies. It approved proposals for the better monitoring and effective implementation of provisions in the companies law on liquidation.

The committee also reviewed the prices and movement of essential commodities in the country and noted that decline in the prices of these commodities have set in. The meeting was presided over by the federal minister for industries and production, Retired Brigadier Mohammad Asghar.

Editorial Urges 'Islamic World Order'

BK2202015195 Karachi NAWA-I-WAQT in Urdu 19 Feb 95 p 10

[Editorial: "New World Order: Our Role and the Real Challenge"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, in her discussions with President Fidel Ramos and her address to a ceremony at Mindanao University during her visit to the Philippines, said that as soon as the threat from Communism ended the United States and the West lost interest in us and left us alone to face the consequences of the Cold War. It is our duty to work collectively to create a new political system based on justice and equality so as to protect ourselves from the implications of the new world order.

The United States has already closed its bases in the Philippines and stopped economic and military aid to Pakistan. One may even disagree in principle with the comments made by the prime minister on the post-Cold War scenario. During the Cold War, the United States and the West fully utilized Pakistan and certain other countries to serve their own interests but lost interest and actually left them high and dry once their objective was achieved.

Practically, there does not seem to be even a hint anywhere of resistance to the challenges posed by the new world order. Every country is vying to please the United States and gain its favor. In spite of the fact that the United States stopped economic and military aid to Pakistan as a kind of punishment and also refuses to deliver the F-16 aircraft despite having received payment for them, Washington is practically making Pakistan do whatever it wishes. The United States has succeeded in capping our nuclear program and now its demand for nonintrusive inspection of our nuclear installations has also been met with the establishment of a seismic center at Chakwal. Incidentally, both these developments have taken place during the rule of Benazir Bhutto.

The United States set up military bases in the Middle East and Gulf countries under the pretext of the war in Kuwait. Now Washington needs bases on our shores to support its bases in those countries. It is suspected that we are going to hand over Gwadar Port to the United States, while Karachi is being described as an alternative to Hong Kong.

No voice is being raised against U.S. domination, even in the Islamic world. Instead, U.S. dictates for the resolution of the Palestinian problem have been accepted wholeheartedly—first by Egyptian President Husni Mubarak, then by PLO Chief Yasir 'Arafat and King Husayn of Jordan. Now the United States is trying to bring President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria into its trap. Even Iran will have no objection to restoring ties with United States if the latter lifts the freeze on Tehran's assets, not to mention other Islamic countries that consistently strive to curry favor with the United States.

While the threat from Communism was alive, the United States and the West considered it the greatest danger. As soon as they eliminated that danger, using our shoulders as the staging ground, they saw Islam as the only remaining threat. They are using different tactics to deal

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with it. Sometimes Islam is branded as "militancy" and sometimes as fundamentalism; at other times it is interpreted as terrorism.

It is surprising that Benazir Bhutto spoke of the challenge posed by the new world order on the soil of the Philippines, which is itself a Christian-majority country and seems to be standing among the ranks of the United States and the West in their anti-Islamic Christian designs. For the past half century, the Philippine Government has exceeded all limits of state terrorism in its attempt to crush the Mindanao Muslim freedom movement. During her rule, Corazon Aquino accepted the demand for autonomy of the Mindanao Muslims, but even after two changes of government the agreement has not been implemented in letter or in spirit. Even our prime minister had to point out that the Mindanao Muslims should be given autonomy within the framework of the Philippine Constitution.

Our prime minister has spoken of the need to face the challenge of the new world order, but in fact she herself has provided proof of accepting the Indian world order [preceding three words published in English] by admitting that if her government had not helped Rajiv Gandhi in connection with the Punjab problem, India would have faced a lot of difficulties.

Lately, India has formally protested to the United States over the manner in which it desires to have the Kashmir dispute settled, saying that Washington wants to make Kashmir an independent state and use it as a base. The Pakistani Government has not had the guts to question U.S. designs. If the prime minister really wants to resist the dangers posed by the new world order, she should first prove her determination through her words and deeds and demonstrate a strong national stand on issues like Kashmir, the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, Gwadar, Karachi, and fundamentalism. At the same time, she should try to close ranks with neighboring Islamic countries. If efforts are made to create an Islamic world order from the platform of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, then perhaps that objective can be achieved. At the moment, the world does not even know what the Islamic doctrine of politics and government is or where it has been implemented. Two Islamic countries—Saudi Arabia and Iran—have experimented with the Islamic system, but there are many differences between the systems of the two countries. It would be better if, as a first step, all Islamic countries sat together and presented an outline of the Islamic system of politics, government, and economy to the world. They should implement this system in accordance with the requirements of 1995 and prove to the world that the Islamic system is comprehensive and universal and can ensure the well-being and salvation of all mankind. At least Pakistan, for its part, should construct and present a model of a modern Islamic democratic parliamentary welfare state, because the raison d'etre of this Islamic nation state is to turn this slogan into a practical reality. Will our prime minister take some practical steps in this regard?

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